

WILLARD WATSON AND HIS ORAL NARRATIVES:
AN ANALYSIS WITH EDITED TEXTS

A Thesis
by
DAVID EUGENE HUNTLEY

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David Eugene Huntley
April 1985

APPROVED BY:

Thomas A. McGowan
Chairperson, Thesis Committee
Roger Wayne Whitener
Member, Thesis Committee
Wilborn E. Lightfoot
Member, Thesis Committee
Lloyd H. Hilton
Chairperson, Department of
English
Jayce V. Lawrence
Dean of the Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

WILLARD WATSON AND HIS ORAL NARRATIVES:

AN ANALYSIS WITH EDITED TEXTS. (May 1985)

David E. Huntley, B. A. The University of the South

M. A., Appalachian State University

Thesis Chairperson: Thomas A. McGowan

Willard Watson of Deep Gap has become well-known as a craftsman and raconteur in his community and as far beyond as the CBS program "On the Road With Charles Kuralt." Willard's homespun wisdom, stories, and dialect are worthy of examination and preservation. I began this process in January 1984 by recording Willard in his workshop, where he told stories while he worked on fashioning his toys out of wood. I was fortunate to find two tapes of him recorded by his niece, Nancy Watson, in the early 1970's. The appendices that follow the text in this thesis are transcriptions of the tapes of Nancy Watson and myself.

Preserving the oral narratives of Willard Watson is important because he represents as oral tradition that is being replaced by audio-visual technology. From an examination of his narratives, we can see how people communicated and entertained themselves before radios and television sets became common objects in most homes. We also see how someone from a community not imbued with the trappings of literacy uses the English language.

I have not separated Willard Watson from his oral narratives. A knowledge of his life and character is necessary to fully appreciate and understand his narratives. These narratives in turn help illuminate the man who created them. The conclusions have been reached through a close analysis of the narratives along with appropriate readings in the discipline of folklore instead of from questions directed to Willard.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Willard in His Workshop	1
Biography	6
Functions	18
Analysis of Categories	29
Content and Style	40
Works Consulted	52
Appendix A	54
Appendix B	56
Appendix C	72
Appendix D	86
Appendix E	123
Appendix F	165
Vita	168

Willard in His Workshop

"One cold rainy day we went to Boone up here," begins Willard Watson as he whittles away on a runner for one of his toy sleds. "Helen, that's the oldest daughter, she wanted to go with me and get her a pair of shoes. And Guy Carlton over here an Calvin Watson's wife Laurie, she went with us on a little Model A pickup. A little Model A pickup. It was an old cold--it was in the winter time, an old cold drizzly--plumb cold." Willard emphasizes the "plumb" and fixes me with a piercing look as he says it. This means that it was really cold that day; any word other than "plumb" falls short.

"We lived right there in a little shack, just as happy as we could be," Willard continues as he picks up a little strip of wood and begins to shape it into another runner. "We went on up there and I ran up with my uncle. He said, 'Whew!' said, 'We need something to warm up our blood.' I said, 'Let's go get us a drink.'

"We went down there--that time you could get some good moonshine whiskey. Otis Watson sold it all his life, and--" Here Willard cuts his eyes at me and says with a slight grin, as if he is letting me in on a secret: "I reckon sells it yet." He turns back to his whittling and

is silent for a moment, apparently framing the rest of the story.

"We went on down there, and if we'd a-quit at that it'd a-measured out all right, but we didn't. We just got us a pint, and us three just naturally drunk it. Well, that'd a-been all right--that wouldn't a-bothered us. Enough to warmed us up good. Well, it got to tastin' pretty good. We just got us another pint, took it on with us. Got up to town there. Right on the corner they was a little old beer joint. We went in that little old beer joint, and when we got there we run up with Clayton Hayes from Blowing Rock. Man, we just about tried to drink it all." Willard shakes his head at the foolishness of his younger days, and glances up at me with an amused, but not embarrassed, expression on his face.

Another pause. Willard is in no hurry to finish this tale; he clearly relishes the act of telling it. He continues: "I come out of there--the policeman's badge--I 'member Old Man Wally Day was the policeman in Boone town then, and his badge looked as big as a dinner plate. I just looked awful. I started across the street, got up to--Helen was over in Old Smitty's store with this neighbor woman. I wallered around there like an old rooster, straightened up, and started across the street. I went in--I knowed when I went where it was warm--I knowed if I stayed in there long it'd make me sick.

"And Helen said, 'Daddy,' said, 'don't get drunk.' I said, 'Oh Hell, sister,' I said, 'I'm done drunk.'"

Willard turns around and pokes at the wood in his stove, a fifty-gallon barrel with a door welded to the side. He seems aware that his listeners, in this case his granddaughter and myself, are anxious for him to continue his story, and he enjoys the suspense he is creating.

He turns back around, returns to his whittling, and finally resumes the story: "Come on home, walked from out here where you all turned in. Walked from there, come on down here to the little shack. The Old Hen in the house said to me, said, 'You had a few snorts, ain't you?' I said, 'Yeah, and plenty of em.' Never give her an ill word.

"And she said, 'I'd be ashamed,' she said, 'a-raisin' a gang of young-uns here and out gettin' drunk.' I said to her, I said, 'I've done quit.'

"She said, 'Prove it to me.' And she come back at me, she said, 'Prove it to me.' Seventeen years from that time I took another drink." Willard looks up from his work at us to let that point sink in. He continues: "If I want it, I've drunk a drink all my life. But she always knowed that I never would get drunk. And that fixed me" (Narrative 4).

As is often the case when Willard tells of one incident, he remembers another related or similar episode. He immediately launches into another tale about the time,

before he was married, that he got so drunk that he vomited down into bib of a new pair of overalls. This tale also progresses in a leisurely fashion, with no plot summary beforehand. He tells it in the order that it happened, identifying the people involved as they enter the narrative. He pauses to get his thoughts together, search for the right tool on his cluttered workbench, refresh his pinch of snuff, and fix his audience with a piercing glance. His manner of telling a tale forces the audience to listen carefully and remember little bits of information, such as names of people and places. Listening to Willard is quite similar, in some ways, to reading a story. He tells the incidents in the order that they happened, complete with dialogue. Willard explains very little, relying on the sequence of events to make his points clear.

Willard Watson is one of the better-known raconteurs of North Carolina. His reputation brings strangers to his home on Wildcat road, and whenever he is in public, he draws a crowd eager to listen to him talk. An examination of his narratives shows that these tales are inspired by his experiences and dedication to working hard with expertise, providing for himself and his family, and living the type of life that makes him proud. His narratives serve several functions for Willard in addition to entertainment; he communicates his culture and values through his stories. Although the subject matter is, for

the most part, unique to Willard, these narratives fit categories recognized by those familiar with oral narrators. This thesis is an examination of Willard's narratives, both as a product of his creating and as oral literature.

Biography

I found it quite challenging and almost impossible to get a clear, coherent biography of Willard Watson. Apparently his memories are not stored in chronological order, and his mind is so full of seventy-nine years of living that he cannot always recall a particular detail. The information that follows on his life has been pieced together from his narratives, from others who have known him, and from answers to specific questions. The sketchy nature of the biographical information does, however, reflect the nature of his life. Willard never set out to follow a career in the way that many people do today. Living back in the mountains, he had limited opportunities for work, but the need for money was not too pressing either. Willard, and the rest of the residents of the Deep Gap area, took what work was available, which amounted to short-term jobs from less than a month's duration to that of several years. Between jobs they hunted, fished, farmed, gathered wood, and enjoyed the simple, rural pleasures of life: square dancing, corn shucking, and entertaining each other with music and stories.

Willard was born on June 1, 1905, just about a mile from his present home on Wildcat Road. He is reluctant to

talk about his father, although he makes a comment now and then: "In fact, that old stock of Triplettts, all of em, didn't have a bit of sense. Ain't no doubt under the sun but what my Dad was a Triplett" (Watson 1984). When a close friend asked Willard about his father, he replied, "Now Spud, you know I was base-born." He went on to say that he searched for his father and eventually found him in Montana. He encouraged the old man to come back to Deep Gap and live with him, but his father responded, "Willard, I ran off and left you when you were a baby, and I'm not goin' to live off of you now" (Whitener 1984).

When Willard was seven months old, his mother left him with his grandparents, Smith and Carlotta Watson, with whom he lived for fourteen years. His grandfather is the one person Willard admires above everyone else: "He fed me when I couldn't take care of myself. Oh, would I love to see him come walkin' now. Wouldn't I love to see my Granny" (Watson 1984). Many of his narratives concern his "grandpaw," but he rarely mentions his mother. He has told me only one tale in which his mother was present, and this incident occurred after he had been living with his grandparents for five or six years. If he has any hard feelings toward his mother, he does not express them. It is obvious that Willard's grandparents served as more than adequate parents for him.

Just above the homesite of Smith and Carlotta Watson is the home of General Dixon and Nancy Watson and their

children. General Dixon, the "Uncle Gen'l" of his narratives, was another role model for Willard. His grandfather and Uncle Gen'l were competent men who taught Willard many of the skills necessary for providing him and his family with food and shelter. From the high regard Willard expresses for both of these men, it is safe to assume that they had an influence on many of the values he expresses today.

Willard did go to school, although it played only a minor part in his life: "I went to the fourth grade, and forgot that. They treated me mean in school. I never could do no good in school at all. Then you didn't need it. You have to have it now" (Watson 1984). The school he attended, Mt. Paron on Stony Fork Road, was similar to most of the seventy-three schools in Watauga County: a one-room frame structure with one teacher handling all grades. It was not unusual for Willard to be absent; less than half of the 5000-plus school-aged children actually attended school, which was in session for seventy-four days a year (Corbitt 15).

The school did not imbue Willard with much of the trappings of the culture of literacy. When the mail comes, his wife, Ora, looks through it and reads the letters and magazines. The few times I have handed Willard something written, he has glanced at it and then set it aside without comment. In spite of the fact that he is cut off from written material, educated people do not intimidate Willard

in the least. At the same time, however, he is not scornful of education and the people connected with it. Some of his closest friends are university professors, and he shows no sense of inadequacy in their presence. His wisdom and common sense are a match for any amount of education. He looks for good sense in a person above all else: "Now, I'll tell you the worst human I've ever met. An educated fool is the worst one I've ever tackled. He ain't got sense enough to tell you, and he don't know what he wants to tell you" (Narrative 4).

If anything, his lack of formal education has made Willard rely more on himself instead of what others have said and done. When he visited the Watsons for his program "On the Road," Charles Kuralt told Willard that he was the quickest thinker he had ever met (Narrative 4). Today, at seventy-nine years old, Willard does spend time reminiscing about "them good old days," but he is not unaware of the present. He keeps up with the news and always has an opinion on what is happening in the nation and the world. When I met Willard for the first time, he had this to say about the government in Washington: "Who knows what they're gonna do next? I always say, 'It's a tough job raisin' a boy up to be a man, but anyone can raise a durned fool'" (Watson 1983). Although Willard fills his talk with expressions that he has collected over the years, he reacts quickly to any new thought or idea rather than relying on a cliché he has stored away in his memory. To say that

Willard is uneducated because of only four years of school is inaccurate; he has learned a tremendous amount from the work he has done and the people he has known.

At the age of fourteen Willard left home and went to work at Shull's Mill for three months on the railroad construction gang. A few years before this, in 1915, the Whiting Lumber Company bought timber rights in the Shulls Mill area, which made a railroad to Boone necessary. The plans were to make Shulls Mill a railroad center for that part of the state (Hayes 4,5). The young Watson wanted to participate in those plans rather than doing less important tasks. He wanted to drive the spikes, and whenever he was caught up in other work and the boss was not watching, he would pick up the hammer. On catching Willard swinging the hammer the boss said, "Willard, I can see right now, they ain't no way a-keepin' you away from that spike-drivin' hammer. Drive all the spikes you want as long as you keep your job up" (Narrative 4). His first paycheck was \$10.52 for slightly less than two weeks' work (Watson 1984).

When Willard left for Shull's Mill, he told no one, and three months passed before anyone knew where he and his cousin were: "Three months, before they ever knowed, any of our folks ever knowed where we was at. We didn't tell em nothin'. I don't yet today. When I get ready to go somewhere, I go. I don't want nobody to gab, no, not as much as my troublemaker in the house" (Watson 1984). After his first job, Willard took work wherever he could find it,

and it was not always close to home. Although he spent time with his grandparents after his fourteenth year, he feels that he was on his own from this point in his life.

Shortly after his job at Shull's Mill, Willard began to cut timber, his favorite work. He and two partners cut timber near Dugger Creek for a man named Jud Hodge. He told them that if they finished by a certain day, he would give them an extra day's pay and all the fried chicken they could eat. The three went to work, one clearing around the tree and notching it, and the other two pulling the crosscut saw. The first day they felled and cut into lengths twenty-one white pines, a total of 12,060 board feet. This figure impressed both Willard and Jud Hodge. Based on his narratives, it is obvious that Willard takes great pride in his expertise in cutting timber, especially in the teamwork required by a crosscut saw. A large part of his enjoyment in logging comes from the knowledge that he is good at it. His feeling of pride in his logging expertise is similar to the admiration he felt for the competence of his grandfather and Uncle Gen'l. As long as there was timber to cut and the need for it, he felt assured that he could always find work.

Before he was married, but "when I come to be grown," Willard and his cousin Fonzo Watson walked to Big Creek, Tennessee, where Fonzo lived, and they helped run a large moonshine operation. They cooked the mash in eighteen sixty-gallon barrels and brought the sugar in by the

thousand-pound load. In the ninety days Willard stayed there and worked, the operation never slowed down. This job lasted three months, and Willard was paid three dollars a day and all the food he could eat. Apparently the operation was quite profitable because the wage was more than double the standard laborer's wage at that time. When I asked Willard if they were worried about government agents interfering, he replied: "No. Well, I'll tell you, they had the law bought over there. That's what they done" (Narrative 4). Over the years Willard learned to make moonshine, apple brandy, and blackberry, elderberry, and persimmon wine. He has a still today, which he claims to use only for exhibitions, and even under these conditions he is only allowed to distill water.

Willard has done work that was far from being pleasant. After he was married he needed money for a cow, and the only available work was with a quarry. His job was to put the large rocks on a conveyor that carried them into the grinder. His Uncle Gen'l worked with him, and they both found the work exhausting. In addition to the strenuous work, they walked to and from the job. After eight months they were able to find work that was closer to home and not as tiring. Willard's reaction now to doing this type of work is that he needed the money to provide for his family, and the nature of the work was relatively unimportant. There was no question of not taking the job if it was available and he needed the money. He did, and still does,

believe strongly in the value of the husband and father providing for his family.

The Depression was not especially tough in the mountains for two reasons: most of the people were self-sufficient, and life was tough in normal times anyway. When I asked Willard what kind of work he did during this time, he said, "Everything a man could think about. We worked a lot on what they called the WPA. I worked a lot on that. Eighty cents a day" (Watson 1984).

Probably the most discouraging time in Willard's working career is when he went to Cleveland, Ohio. One cold, windy day at Thunder Hill Gap he felt that there had to be better work somewhere. One of his friends, Don Hayes, had been to Cleveland and was planning to return. Willard announced to his family that he was going, borrowed twenty dollars from a friend, and left for Cleveland with Don. They found work in a battery plant ("Willers" is what he said, but he was not able to spell it for me), and did various jobs in connection with manufacturing batteries for motorcycles. Willard worked there for two and a half years, 1942 to 1944. He did manage to make enough money to build his present home, buy forty acres of land, and have a little left over. A number of people from Deep Gap went to Cleveland to work at this time, including his Uncle Gen'l and cousin, Arnold Watson. He did not go, as many did, to get away from the mountains and to see what other parts of the country were like. He went for the sole purpose of

providing for his family, and he was most anxious to return home long before he was able to. He had decided that as soon as he had twelve fifty-dollar bills saved up, in addition to what he had already sent his family, he would leave for Deep Gap. Willard lived in a boarding house run by Greeks ("You couldn't hardly understand a thing they said"), but who treated him just like family (Watson 1984). Apparently he lived very carefully there, saving as much money as possible. When he received his last paycheck, he decided to celebrate with a drink of alcohol, something he had not done for two and a half years. He went into the bar where he got his paychecks cashed and surprised the bartender by asking for a drink, the best whiskey in the house. He drank a shot of Canadian rye and chased it with blackberry wine.

Most of Willard's work has been in a sawmill or in the woods cutting timber. He has done just about anything, even coal mining, to raise his family, but cutting timber is his favorite. "I wish I was back then," he says. "I'd shut this door, and run. I'd rather work in the mountains than any place I've ever been. And if I was young--course I won't be no more--I'll tell you where. They's two states--in Oregon I'd hang my cap in one of them big lumber camps and say, 'Boys, I've come to stay'" (Narrative 4). The other state he especially likes is Montana, where he once spent five months cutting timber.

In the early sixties Willard made a few yokes as toys to sell when a wagon train came through Boone. He sold these for a dollar each, made some more, and then branched out into other toys. What has helped him do so well in his craft is his ability to look at something and then make it on a small scale. Willard was guided by Ralph Rinzler, who directed him in keeping his craft authentically Appalachian. Since his retirement from timber-cutting, Willard has been making toys full time. He sells them as fast as he can make them. Although the work does get tiresome at times, it is the next best job to being out cutting timber. Willard feels an affinity for wood; it is there to be used, either on a large scale for construction or on a small scale for his toys. Whenever he looked at a forest, he saw it as a stand of timber to be logged and then sawed into lumber. Willard does feel an obligation to continue making toys as long as he is able to, filling orders and appearing at the State Fair in Raleigh, which he did for the twenty-second straight year in October 1984.

His toys in many ways reflect the values Willard has lived with all his life. He makes models of working implements: mule-drawn wagons filled with rakes, hoes, and shovels, hog-drawn sleds, and mule drawn plows. Stage coaches and covered wagons are the top of the line in his craft, intricate models complete with passengers and luggage. He even duplicates the complicated wooden spring mechanism that allowed these conveyances to absorb some of

the bumps of the road. All of his toys are reminiscent of the life Willard lived as a boy, when all the work was done by hand or with help from animals. Although I feel that he does not consciously plan it, his narratives and toys affirm his life as a boy and young man, both as products of his creative ability and skill with his hands and also by the statements they make.

Willard's workshop is filled with power tools now: drills, a planer and sander, a band saw and a table saw. Most of his toys are "mass-produced" in quantities of five to ten. He uses patterns to saw the wood into rough shapes, and then applies the final touches with carving knives. Even though he uses power tools, the final product is still the result of hours of careful work with hand tools. At seventy-nine years old, his hands are amazingly adept as he whittles a block of wood into the shape of a mule.

Even though Willard and Ora have traveled around the country and have received nationwide attention, they have chosen to continue living in the same manner in which they grew up. Their white frame house is heated by woodstoves, and Ora does all her cooking on a wood-burning cookstove. She was given an electric range, but it was never hooked up. She explained, "I'm so used to cookin' on wood that I would have to learn all over again on a new stove" (Watson 1983). Willard cures a hog every year, and their garden provides vegetables for the entire year. They live lives

of established roles: Willard has always provided shelter and the money necessary while Ora has raised children and vegetables and taken care of the activities within the house. Willard's narratives reflect the values he places on these roles, and he often questions the way some of the young folks today abandon their duties to their family.

They both have visits from strangers these days, because the word has spread about Willard's toys and tales and Ora's quilts. These visitors find that mountain hospitality is not a myth. They will also find that the welcome is selective, based on a person's character. As Willard says of his visitors: "High or low, they get the same treatment from me. If they's decent folks they can sit at my table. If they ain't they don't get invited" (Whitener 5). Willard's favorite parting phrase to a visitor is "If you like us, come back" (Watson 1983).

Functions

Two questions come to my mind after listening to Willard's narratives: "Why has Willard become a storyteller?" and "Why does he enjoy telling his narratives and reminiscences so much?" I find it easier to answer the first question: Willard grew up when the oral transmission of stories was the main source of information and entertainment. With no radio, television, movies or books, Willard's family and friends talked and played banjos, fiddles, guitars, and harmonicas to pass the time when they were not working. Important ideas and events became part of a story in the form of a prose narrative or a poetic, musical ballad. They could not say, as we can now, "Did you read about . . . ?" and then discuss the incident. Whatever happened of interest was passed around orally, and each person could create the story in whatever fashion seemed to be the most entertaining. The better storytellers were often asked to tell of an incident about which everyone may have already heard. The manner of telling about the known event was as interesting as the event that inspired it. Apparently Willard was one of these master narrators; he reports events as much for the enjoyment of telling them as for transmitting the

information.

The second question, "Why does Willard enjoy telling his narratives so much today?," involves a much closer look at the functions of oral narratives. Homes in even the most isolated communities usually have a radio and a television, and some have a record player of some type. A large television and a cabinet model stereo are prominent pieces of furniture in Willard's living room. In spite of the availability of this type of entertainment, he would rather talk and swap tales than sit in front of the television. At a family gathering, Willard and his cousin, the nationally-known singer, Doc Watson, were entertaining the crowd; Doc was playing his banjo and Willard was dancing. As soon as Willard sat down and started talking, Doc put his banjo down and said, "I was goin' to let you talk." Willard replied, "I'd as soon hear ourselves talk as anything" (Narrative 1). One cold spring day Willard and I visited a lifetime friend of his, William Miller, his daughter, and her family. When we arrived they turned the television off and began "Do you remember. . .?" and "How about the time" From that point on they reminisced and swapped tales (Watson 1984). Understanding why this is such an enjoyable and satisfying activity requires a close look at the different functions of oral narratives.

The narratives under discussion here are not myths or fantasies; they are all told as being true. Willard usually makes a special effort to convince his audience

that what he is telling actually happened, and he always differentiates between those he participated in and those that were told to him. In a sense his narratives serve the same function as historical legends which concern people of heroic stature in situations of danger and excitement. Willard tells of various situations he and his friends have been in, and it is the way they react that is of interest. These reactions indicate what type of people they are, varying from strong, kind, or generous to weak, foolish, or selfish. Just as legends tend to immortalize, Willard's narratives at least prolong a person's experiences and influences beyond his death.

In his essay, "The Four Functions of Folklore," William Bascom claims that folklore permits a person to act and use words not generally approved of by his community (277). The narrator can always say that he is simply repeating what he saw or heard, and that he should not be held accountable for any strong language or embarrassing actions. To some degree I can see this function in Willard's narratives. He frequently uses such words as "hell" and "damn" in his stories which he rarely says in general conversation. He will tell of a frustrated old maid who "missed out on something when she was young and is now regrettin' it," clearly suggesting that too much virtue and chasteness is unnatural (Watson 1984). Willard's culture, though, supports the view that sex outside of marriage is sinful. Probably the most startling example is

a toy pistol he makes. Pulling the trigger on this model causes a carved couple to copulate. He is very careful with the subject of sex, but this risque toy is permitted under the guise of folklore, and Willard's craft of carving toys has been treated as an important facet of Appalachian folklore. He delights in showing his pistols to anyone he considers old enough, male or female, and always claims that his best customers are women. With this toy and his narratives, then, he has found acceptable outlets for some of the restrictions of his culture.

In addition to allowing him an occasional indiscretion, Willard's narratives provide an escape for him and his audience. He frequently compares life today with the way things were when he was growing up, and concludes with "Them good old days is gone." He was young and healthy then and the mountains were not crowded with people. He takes himself and his audience back to what sounds like an idyllic time, when the air and streams were clean and a dollar a day provided a comfortable existence. His story about driving a cow to Tennessee and staying with hospitable strangers along the way makes the impersonal motels and crowded campgrounds of today seem sad substitutes (Narrative 4). Willard walked to and from work on trails with the chirping of birds and the rustle of the wind in the trees instead of the roar of trucks and automobiles. He squirrel hunted whenever and wherever he wanted to, engaging in a sort of friendly contest with the

game warden. Obviously he is overlooking many of the hardships, but nevertheless he is able to escape, for a short time, to what he remembers as a better life. The audience, too, can see what life today would be like if people had preserved more of the simple pleasures. Willard's love of logging and its lifestyle is evident when he tells of his visits to Montana and Oregon. He concludes, "I sure would love to. I told em if I was young, I'd hang my 'boggan up in one of them big lumber camps and say, 'Boys, I've come to stay'" (Narrative 4).

Even though Willard remembers the "good old days" as being more good than otherwise, it is obvious that life exacted a price that would break the back of many people today. Everyone had to pitch in and work hard to produce food and firewood to survive the winters. That meant working in all kinds of weather: putting corn up in rainstorms, plowing when the ground was still frozen, breaking the ice from corn husks before shucking. They did whatever needed to be done when the time came to do it. When Willard tells of the rituals and work necessary for survival, he is, in a sense, "validating culture . . . and justifying its rituals and institutions" (Bascom 292). To him, the fact that everyone had to work hard to survive is good; it made life more meaningful because everyone contributed. He constantly compares life then with life now, and often concludes, "And you take the way they done, now, they done different to what the young folks does now."

When he tells about his chores, he says, "And I didn't lay in bed like the young folks does now." After describing the manner his grandmother preserved fruit, he comments, "And now, the young generation, they'd laugh at you. Yes sir. They'd laugh at you" (Narrative 3). Willard does not seem frustrated because he cannot change the attitudes of the younger generation; he just comments on the difference, and his comments affirm the life he knew when he was growing up.

While he affirms the work ethic of his youth, Willard also realizes that work must be as pleasureable as possible. One practice that made corn shucking less of a chore was to hide a quart of "pure corn likker" down in the pile of corn. Whoever found it had the privilege of taking the first swallow. The discovery of the jug did not bring the work to a stop, however: "Nobody didn't get drunk--they never got drunk" (Narrative 3). He tells of other times that neighbors would gather to work when moonshine and music were a part of the gathering. He always makes a point to say that the drinking never led to drunkenness. In a sense he is validating the practice of mixing work and pleasure, but not to the extent that work is neglected.

In spite of the hard work necessary for survival in Willard's youth, life moved at a more leisurely pace then than in the 1980's. There were times when a person could do what he wanted and not have to worry about the consequences. When he and Doc were reminiscing about their

younger days, Willard compared the leisurely pace with the frenzy now: "Back when we worked for a dollar a day, everybody was just as happy as they could be. And if we wanted to go a-fishin', hell, we went a-fishin'. . . Now, if you lose one day, you're six months behind. Course now, it don't worry me, but I know, it's true" (Narrative 1). Even though they needed to work hard, they were not driven to accumulate more than necessary. They were able to balance the necessary work with fun, enjoying both in a way that produced a strong sense of satisfaction. Willard is able to relive and convey this satisfaction through his narratives.

Willard was educated orally. Whatever he learned was from being told or watching and then doing. In some cases he learned how to act and not to act from stories used as examples. Aunt Beck Sanders, several generations before him, provided an example of how not to live. Apparently she was a manipulator, an irascible character, and a constant squabbler. Although Willard never knew her, his grandfather told him and other grandchildren about her. One story that I heard both Willard and his cousin, Arnold Watson, tell is about one of Aunt Beck's many court cases. She stalked out of the courtroom and complained, "They didn't give me justice in there!" A bystander remarked loud enough for her and everyone else to hear, "Godrot ye! If they'd a-give ya justice they'd a-sent ya to hell!" (Narrative 3) This story serves the same purpose as a

moral, although in this case the moral is not stated and the story is told as a true occurrence.

Many of Willard's "educational" narratives are more obviously instructional than the ones involving Aunt Beck. He explains the process of curing a hog as he learned it from his grandfather: "Now, I cure mine in the old-timey style just like my granddad taught me all of his life. He cured hisn all just as fer back as I can 'member that way" (Narrative 3). While he is describing this process, he remembers incidents over the years that became a part of the yearly job of curing a hog. He does the same thing when he tells of the work necessary to make molasses, preserve fruit, smooth boards with a drawing knife, or make pure corn liquor. Willard begins with a description of a process and ends up giving a series of narratives mixed in with the instruction. When Doc asked him about the construction of a cane mill, Willard began to describe it, which led to the story of Uncle Harrison Miller, who traveled throughout the community making molasses. He then described his part in the process: walking barefooted behind the steer as it turned the mill, which then led to the story of his first pair of shoes (Narrative 3).

Willard tells many of his narratives to make a point, usually to show what he has learned from the experience. Sometimes he makes his point clear before or after the tale; other times he lets his audience figure out why he is telling that particular incident. When he tells of the

time before he was married that he got drunk enough to vomit inside the bib of a new pair of overalls, he concludes the tale by saying, "Well, when I come to myself and got over that, I said, 'Well, if I can't do no better than that, I'll just let her alone'" (Narrative 4). Another time when he was married and had children, Willard drank too much on a trip to Boone. When he returned home drunk, his wife, Ora, admonished him for drinking when he had a family to provide for. He told her he had quit, and concluded this tale with: "Seventeen years from that time I took another drink" (Narrative 4). In neither of these tales does he explicitly state to his audience that he learned either to drink more carefully or not to drink at all, but he implicitly makes that point very clear.

Whether Willard lets the audience figure out the point the tale makes, or whether he clearly states it, he never forces it on his audience. It is clear what he learned from the experience, but he never makes his audience uncomfortable by trying to impose the same lesson on his listeners.

The points that Willard makes with his narratives tend to affirm his culture and possibly assure a conformity and continuity from one generation to the next (Bascom 294). Willard has accepted without question the values and way of life passed down to him in the forms of hands-on experience and the various stories circulating among the family. His grandfather and Uncle Gen'l were exemplary models for him

because of their knowledge and expertise. Because he admired their skills, he accepted without question their values: hard work was necessary and good, pleasure had its time and place, families stuck together, neighbors helped each other in times of need, and father and mother, husband and wife, and children of all ages had definite roles. Of course, many people believe as strongly as Willard does in these values, but he fills his narratives with their affirmation. He comments on the sad situation today when mothers do not know where their daughters are, and of daughters who do not know what their mothers are doing. The mother's place is to raise the children and manage the kitchen, and the husband provides the wherewithal for her to do this. At the time when jobs were scarce in these mountains, Willard spent two and a half years in Cleveland, Ohio, earning money to buy his family's present home. He never questions the fact that, as a child, he did a major portion of the chores on the homeplace, and he often compares this with the laziness of the young generation today. I am sure Willard finds it sad that this continuity has begun to fall apart with his children and grandchildren, who have been distracted by radio, television, and the movies, as well as by the many different lifestyles available today.

I've never asked Willard why he tells his tales so readily with so much enthusiasm. To him, that would seem as foolish as my asking him why he eats. Obviously,

talking and remembering the past are important parts of his life. Even though I have separated the reasons into several categories, pleasure is the main reason. Willard receives great pleasure from creating a tale, reminiscing and escaping into his past, and affirming his culture.

Analysis of Categories

My purpose in trying to classify Willard Watson's oral narratives is to place his narratives in recognizable categories and explain why they seem to fit where they do. Since not all folklorists are in agreement on the terms and the categories, the category description will often be more important than the term itself.

The contents of many of Willard's narratives are original with him, although they do contain a number of traditional elements. Only a few of Willard's stories are traditional in both content and form, and even these do not follow widely recognizable genres. He does not tell tall tales, hero tales, jokes, legends, and myths; he does not gossip, and he rarely lets rumor enter his narratives. He has created and developed a number of narratives from his own experiences, and he repeats stories he has heard from older members of the family. He tells them in a style and dialect common to the mountain people of the Appalachians. The issue to be examined, then, is how Willard's narratives, those he has heard and those he has created, fit into categories of oral folk literature.

All that Willard tells is told as true, and much of this can be verified by other members of the family and

some of his older friends. Whatever Willard tells that is untrue is the result of a frustrating memory, as Willard himself says, "My thinker ain't as good as it used to be" (Narrative 4). One of the ancestors of the Watsons is an Indian named Grassy Jim Triplett. He was found abandoned on a meadow by a man named Parks and was adopted by a Triplett. The last time I heard Willard tell this tale, he said that Grassy Jim was adopted by David Ike Watson, who gave him the Watson name. Willard had his facts straight when he told this tale back in 1975 to members of his family who also knew about Grassy Jim (Narrative 2). The material of Willard's narratives, then, is from his family, friends, and himself, and, except for an occasional lapse of memory, can be taken as true.

One possible category for Willard's narratives is the memorate. Laurits Bodker defines the memorate as "a narrative told by people about a purely personal experience of their own. It has not the nature of fiction, and is not tradition" (Folk Literature 195). Although most of Willard's narratives are nonfictional and nontraditional, they may not fit the category of memorate because none are purely personal; they involve either family, friends, or strangers with Willard reacting to these people in one way or another. Juha Pentikainen states that for a memorate to be purely personal, it must be about a supernatural occurrence. For those personal experiences that do not deal with the supernatural, he uses the term "chronicate."

He concludes: "For an account of secular content, which is not a legend, the term chronicate could be used" ("Belief, Memorate, Legend" 221). It is safe to say, then, that many of Willard's narratives are chronicates since they deal with his own experiences over the years.

The term "personal narrative", as defined by Sandra Stahl, also describes many of his tales: "The personal narrative is a prose narrative relating a personal experience; it is usually told in first person and its content is nontraditional" (Fabula 20). Many of Willard's stories deal with a specific incident, a single episode, involving him and someone else. Even though these tales may fit into the surrounding conversation, they all have distinct beginnings and endings. Willard also tells them in a style different from that of his conversation; he has created the details of the incident and developed it carefully from beginning to end in a style more formal than his usual conversation. The effect is very similar to that produced by someone who, reminded by the conversation of an incident he has read, picks up a book and reads a paragraph or a chapter to an audience. In one sense Willard's narratives resemble written literature. While he is telling a narrative, he does not exchange comments with his audience. Instead, he appears to be concentrating on the tale and searching his memory for the correct way to tell it. Stahl also notices the similarity between an oral narrator and a novelist: "The person who tells of his own

personal experiences in narrative form is rather more like the novelist than the legend teller since he creates both the reality of the plot and the realistic detail" (Fabula 26).

Among Willard's narratives are family stories. These are different from personal narratives because they are about the family and are shared by members of the family, whereas the personal narrative belongs only to the person who experienced the incident. Both Willard and his cousin Arnold Watson tell, albeit incompletely, about the beginnings of the Watson family in the Stony Fork/Deep Gap area of North Carolina. Within this saga are single episodes that have been passed down through the generations as family stories. The stories that they both tell without prompting are about Grassy Jim, who was found as an abandoned baby in a meadow (Narrative 3), and the fight between Grassy Jim and his son Luke (Narrative 2). Both Willard and Arnold have made it clear that they had heard these tales from their grandfather, Smith Watson. Grassy Jim, Smith's maternal grandfather, may have told Smith about his discovery, and there is also a chance that Smith heard about it from the man who discovered him, Old Man Parks. When I heard Willard and Arnold tell of the fight, they both told it in almost the same words, complete with dialogue. These stories have been passed among the family down to the youngest generation and have become traditional within the family. The entire family, then, can tell about

Grassy Jim Triplett and call it a family story.

On one occasion Willard and another cousin, Doc Watson, swapped tales of their youth about various troublesome and exemplary farm animals, work under adverse conditions, and incidents of various people they have known (Narrative 1). A number of family stories came out of this exchange of personal narratives. Once these narratives are told by members of the family whenever a suitable occasion arises, they become family stories. They become tales that the family does not mind hearing over and over again.

According to Zeitlin et al., a family story is "any incident retold by one family member about another over a period of years" (10). Mody C. Boatright says that these various stories never form a connected history (1). As far as I can tell from listening to various members of the Watson family, there is not enough information to form a connected history; in fact, they seem a little frustrated that they do not know more about their family. What Willard and others tell are family stories, usually single-incident episodes, that belong to the entire family but do not form a complete history.

Another type of single-incident narrative that is part of Willard's repertoire is the anecdote, which in his case is also a type of family story. I have chosen to name those tales anecdotes that illustrate an unusual or exaggerated personality trait of the character. These are stories about "eccentric rather than conventional souls"

and they "enable us to simplify the complexities of a family member's personality into an easily remembered, easily communicated narrative" (Zeitlin et al 3, 5, 14). Both Willard and his cousin, Arnold Watson, told me the tale about Aunt Beck's court case described in Chapter 3. They both tell the tale in similar forms, and they quote Aunt Beck and the bystander exactly the same. Since neither was present when this incident happened, they are repeating it as they heard it, using the dialogue to illustrate Aunt Beck's character.

Willard tells of another time when his Grandpaw and Uncle Avery were working for Aunt Beck, grubbing stumps for twenty-five cents a day. She sneaked up on them, and as soon as Uncle Avery took a moment to catch his breath, she said, "You needn't look up. It ain't dinnertime yet!" (Narrative 3). In both of these anecdotes, Willard and Arnold quote Aunt Beck in a tone of voice designed to make her appear petulant and irascible. Although I have no proof of this, the tales of Aunt Beck could very easily have circulated among the community since several of her lawsuits involved people outside of the family.

The final category that I see as a part of Willard's oral narratives is the reminiscence. The first type of reminiscence is "a reflection or description of some remembered place, item, or person" (Fabula 38). Although the reminiscence may be polished from many retellings, it is not concerned with a single incident, and this separates

it from the personal narrative or chronicate. When Willard talks about his logging experiences in the North Carolina mountains and in Montana (Narrative 3), and when he tells of his two and a half years working in Cleveland, Ohio (Watson 1984), he is reminiscing. Within these descriptions he inserts narratives about specific events: watching a mother squirrel carry her young to a sourwood after Willard cut down the tree containing her nest, finding shelter from a hailstorm in Montana, and cashing his last paycheck in Cleveland. Quite often Willard will begin to reminisce, and this serves as a reminder of a particular incident, which he tells as a personal narrative, an anecdote, or a family story.

A second type of reminiscence is concerned with a repeated incident or recurring event. A favorite of Willard's is his description of the chores and practices necessary to provide food and fuel for the winter. He usually begins with "And when they'd get their crops all done up, they'd go to gettin' wood, and they'd get enough wood to last em through the winter." He continues with a description of his grandmother drying fruit and concludes with Uncle Harrison Miller traveling around the country making molasses (Narrative 3). I have heard him go through this description at least three times, and the versions are almost identical. He tells of this in much the same way that he tells his narratives, as if he is reciting something he had created and then committed to memory. It

does not form a story, it does not refer to a specific incident, and it happened many times in the same manner. The use of the imperfect tense is a clue that this is a recurring event that Willard views as a custom or practice.

Only rarely have I asked Willard to tell a certain story. Most often he will reminisce about his past, or he will talk about something he has recently heard or seen on television. This type of conversation will remind him of an incident which he will then recount as a narrative distinct from normal conversation.

The content of Willard's narratives deals mainly with work, both when he was a child and a grown man. He tells a few stories about hunting, a few about drinking, and a few about his dogs. The clearest division for content is to separate his childhood from his adulthood tales, and within these two categories most of the stories will center around work. In the tales of his youth, Willard is often the tenderfoot who recognizes the expertise of the accomplished old timer. When he reminisces about the preparations for winter, he makes it clear that he was given the tasks suitable for a young boy: "And I weren't big enough to saw nothin', but I was big enough to carry wood in" (Narrative 3). When Uncle Harrison Miller came by to make molasses, Willard was the one who had to drive the steers as they ground the cane. The older folks handled the cane and made sure the process went correctly. To complete the picture

of a tenderfoot, Willard was barefoot at the time, not yet old enough to own a pair of shoes. He remembers the first pair of shoes he owned and the pride that went with owning them, a sure sign that he was growing up (Narrative 2). As he grew older and was able to do some of the work on his own, he still had plenty to learn from those who had already benefitted from their mistakes. Early one spring he helped his Uncle Gen'l with the plowing because he was on his back with sciatica rheumatism. At his age Willard did not realize the danger of plowing frozen ground. After observing Willard "pulling up sheets of frozen ground as big as that door," his grandfather told him that he was going to break the plow. Three times in this short tale Willard says that he did not even think about breaking the plow: "Didn't have enough sense to know it, about breakin' the plow nor nothin'" (Narrative 1). Later he had the task of shaving boards with a drawknife. He was able to handle the work, but not without blistering his hands. His grandfather, however, "could just sit there and draw boards all day long and never blister his hands" (Narrative 1). His Uncle Gen'l was also a model for Willard. He always speaks of Uncle Gen'l as doing something right, of knowing how to do well whatever he attempted: "He was the only man I ever seed on the top side of the earth that could keep a sled in a ten-acre field" (Narrative 1).

Now Willard is the expert old timer, both with his hands and his mind. His age prevents him from logging as

he used to, but his success with his toy-making points to a special talent. He talks of cutting timber, making "pure corn likker," caning chairs, curing a hog, and grinding sugar cane as one who knows the process and once did it well. He is also an expert old timer mentally. Willard tells of a discussion he had with a woman lawyer in Raleigh, and the conclusion shows that he won the battle of wits: "When she got ready to leave, she said, 'Mr. Watson,' said, 'I want to tell you,' she said, 'you're the first man, the first man that ever backed me up in the corner.' Now I just come out ahead of her. When she left, she left light" (Narrative 4).

One of Willard's favorite tales of a foolish tenderfoot involves a "sassy" young man who stopped by the house and asked him where the road went. Willard's reply: "I said, 'I'm sorry, young feller, this road don't go anywhere.' I said, 'It stays right where it's at.' I want to tell you one thing. That young feller didn't ax me no more questions" (Narrative 4). Now this tale is not original to Willard, although he may have actually experienced this exchange. The question and answer about the road are from "The Arkansas Traveler," attributed to Col. Sandy Faulkner of Kentucky. (Botkin 346-349). It has since become a popular fiddle tune involving a skit. A lost traveler approaches a local squatter who is playing the first part of the tune over and over. The traveler asks a number of questions about where he is, how far is it

to the next house, where the road goes, and what are the chances for food, drink, and a bed at the squatter's house. The squatter pretends ignorance and refuses hospitality until the traveler takes the fiddle and completes the tune (Driftwood n.p.). I did not ask Willard where he had heard this tale because I did not want to challenge the veracity of his story. It is quite possible that he heard or even saw the exchange acted and remembered it well enough to use it at an appropriate time. In any case this is the only narrative of his that I recognized for its traditional content.

Willard can tell of his triumphs without seeming to brag because he also tells of his failures and foolishness. He shows that he has learned from his mistakes and eventually reached a degree of wisdom and expertise.

Regardless of which categories Willard's narratives seem to fit, they either come from a personal experience or have been handed down through his family and community. He has created the form for his personal experience narratives, telling them the same way time after time. Willard also tells those incidents he heard as stories in the same form that he heard them, indicating a respect for a well-told tale.

Content and Style

Willard Watson falls somewhere between a polished storyteller and someone who just remembers. He is not a professional performing storyteller, one who sits in front of an audience and tells a set repertoire of tales. For the most part he tells of his past in a loosely-structured form, mixing in his philosophy and values of life, comparisons between "them good old days" and the present, and any other thoughts that come to his mind. Willard's narratives come out of his own reminiscing and also the surrounding conversation, especially when he is with people who share a similar past.

Narrative 1, from the early seventies, is an excellent example of an exchange between Willard and someone he grew up with, in this case his cousin Doc Watson. Although Willard is not actually performing alone in this exchange, it is obvious that he is the storyteller present. Doc reminds him of an incident that both are familiar with, and Willard tells it as a story. Most of these stories appear to be created on the spot by Willard, rather than those he had previously created and then stored in his memory as part of his repertoire. Doc may have heard Willard tell these stories before, or he may know that Willard can make

any of these incidents interesting because of the way he tells them. In either case, Willard seems to be having more fun remembering than performing in front of the family.

When I recorded Willard's narratives, beginning in January of 1984, I came as a visitor who knew very little about his past. He knew that I was interested in material on the Watson family, a subject about which I knew only a few details. He was very happy to oblige because he enjoys remembering and talking as long as he has an appreciative audience, and apparently he considered an audience of one large enough. In this setting, since I was not able to remind him of many incidents, he had to do all the remembering. Willard began by reminiscing about the Watson family's settling and homesteading in North Carolina and the way of life when he was a little boy. From these reminiscences came personal narratives, anecdotes, and family stories that he had either heard from older members of the family or had created himself (Narrative 3).

Several weeks later when I went with Willard to visit William Miller, I heard several people who especially enjoy talking about their younger days enthusiastically swap tales. One tale led to the next, and they all had their turn at telling something. They were not trying to outdo each other with tall tales or jokes; they were simply recounting incidents they had participated in over the years. One person would take the stage for a while, but

each had his turn to contribute to the conversation. In the course of this conversation, I heard Willard tell a number of tales he had already told me. I was struck by the similarity in the two versions. He had created these tales from incidents in his past, and he tells this created version the same way every time. I also noticed that he seemed unaware of his audience or companions while he was telling a tale. It seemed as if he were reading the words in his mind as someone else would read a chapter from a book. As I listened to Willard, I began to see a pattern, or style, in most of his narratives that separated him from a person who simply remembers and talks.

When Willard begins a narrative, he does not give a summary of the incident beforehand, nor does he jump ahead in the narrative and give a detail out of chronological order. His introductions depend, to a degree, on the conversation out of which the tales come. I asked him to tell me about the time he had more moonshine than he could handle, and he started: "That broke me. That fixed me up. One cold rainy day--he's gone now, he's done paid the price--we went to Boone up here" (Narrative 4). From this point on he described the details in the order they happened, introducing the names of people and places as they entered the incident. When Willard finished this story, he began another narrative about drinking: "Now this is back, on back. We was a-saw-millin' down under the mountain here fer William Miller" (Narrative 4). This

narrative progresses in the same manner as the one before it, with no indication of what is going to happen. He does not say: "I 'member the time I got so drunk that I threw up down the inside of a new pair of overalls." His audience will find this out only after listening to the entire narrative. By telling the incident in this manner, Willard re-creates it as it happened, and he appears to be watching it happen as he tells it. His audience is also able to see it unfold in much the same way as it happened. The pattern of his narratives is very similar to that of written literature, but Willard does not read, nor does he come from a family that reads. During his four years of school he no doubt heard stories being read, probably by the teacher, and he certainly learned to read to a limited degree. There is no indication that, once he left school after the fourth grade, he pursued any kind of reading and writing on his own. He also never mentions that he has read something; he says that he either heard it or saw it. His knowledge of the pattern of stories has come from what he has read. He has a good idea of what a story should do, however, because his manner of narrating keeps his tale as much like the incident as possible, and it also makes his audience listen carefully for all the necessary details. Willard follows this same pattern for longer narratives that contain a number of shorter episodes, interesting by themselves. A good example of this type of tale is when he and two friends drove a cow from Deep Gap, North Carolina,

to Big Creek, Tennessee, and worked there in a large moonshine operation for three months (Narrative 4).

In general Willard's sentences are paratactic rather than hypotactic. He uses independent clauses almost exclusively, usually connected with coordinating conjunctions: "And I ain't seed him in years. And I found he was over there, or would be there that day, and I went over and seed him. Looked well--one leg off--looked well, though. And I went back yesterday and he was in the rest home there at Blowing Rock" (Narrative 4). Willard does not avoid subordinate clauses; he just does not build his sentences in that complex a fashion. He adds information on an equal basis rather than subordinating. He uses the adverb clause telling when, but he manages to use it almost paratactically: "Well, come bedtime, I just stood around like a lost chicken from its mother" (Narrative 4).

This paratactic style gives his narratives the quality of moving rapidly and happening as the audience hears them. Instead of reflecting on his experiences and arranging information on various levels of importance, Willard tells them as if he has just watched the incidents happen, giving the impression that he is more interested in re-creating the incident than in impressing the audience with his creative talent. Since he tells the same tale many times in the same way, he does know what information he wants to include and in what order. The fact that Willard comes from an oral, rather than a written, culture tends to keep

his sentence structure less complex. At the same time, however, he must be aware that his tales are livelier when told in a simple, fast-moving style.

Names of people and places are important to Willard. He makes a special point in giving full names, even though his listeners do not know the people involved. Quite often he will stop to remember a name before continuing the narrative. I asked Willard what he knew about the story of Tom Dooley. He began: "And they was an old man by the name of Frank--[long pause]--my thinker ain't as good as it used to be. Frank Proffitt. He's the man that wrote the--he's the man that had the closest to it, Tom Dooley, of anybody I've knowed of" (Narrative 4). With all the characters fully named, the narratives take on an authenticity that would be lacking if he simply referred to people as "a feller" or "an old man." His memory and concern for names enable him to give full names for the men he worked with as far back as sixty-five years (Narrative 4). Willard's manner of naming is not unique to him. He often refers to someone as "The Old Man Tom" or "Old Man George" (Narrative 3), ancestors who died long before Willard was born, or "The Old Man William Miller" (Narrative 4), who is a few years older than he is now. I have heard both cousins, Doc and Arnold, and his friend, William Miller, refer to people in the same way.

In addition to the importance of a person's real name, Willard is careful to give someone's nickname: "And they

come some boys along one day, and The Old Man George--they called him Pencil-Nose George, now, that's what his name was." He goes on to explain the nickname: "And his little nose come out there and it was just as sharp as it could be. Called him Pencil-Nose George. That's what they called him" (Narrative 2). "Cow-Buyin' Tom" is another whose nickname fits one of his characteristics. Some nicknames do not seem to fit or even be necessary, but nonetheless Willard gives them, as in the introduction to a tale about a diligent mother squirrel: "I said to Steve, I said, 'Well--' His nickname was Gaz, and Sammy, we called him Sammy--Arnold, his nickname was Sammy, and mine was Henry" (Narrative 3). Apparently they had been having fun attaching different names to each other, and these happened to stick. Willard has given his wife nicknames and often refers to her as "The Old Lady" or "The Old Hen." At times he will mention her as "the one that's up in the house. Never have I heard him refer to her by her name, Ora, either in her presence or when he talks about her. Yet she always refers to him as Willard. This may be a custom left over from the belief that the man of the family deserved a higher degree of respect than the wife and mother.

The names of places seem as important to Willard as the names of people. When he mentions someone, he often names him as "an old man by the name of--" When naming a place he frequently says, "They called it the Walker Stand. . . They called it the Hendricks Stand. Man by the name of

Leonard Hendricks. . . They's a place down there they call the Coon Den Branch" (Narrative 3). When he was telling me about his logging experiences in Montana, he said, "We stayed in an old hotel by the name of Grant Hotel" (Narrative 3). It appears that Willard is being very careful to say that a person or place is named or called something, rather than just say the name, as in "We stayed in the Grant Hotel." This characteristic, as well as his care in remembering names, indicates that they do have a great deal of importance for him in his narratives. Since Willard tells "true tales, proper names help convince his audience of the authenticity of his stories. He appears to be saying that anyone who doubts the truth of his tales can always substantiate it by checking with the people involved.

Dialogue plays a large part in Willard's tales. Natural conversation helps characterize the people involved, moves the narrative forward in place of explanation and gives a greater sense of immediacy to the narrative. He rarely uses ambiguous indirect quotations, as in, "I said that we will see something interesting here." Instead, he repeats exactly what he and the other characters would have said in that situation. He even uses dialogue when there was none, as in the case with a dog: "His [the dog's] name was Rusty--Rusty says, 'No, you ain't a-comin' in'" (Narrative 4). Willard enjoys talking about the dogs he has owned, and he talks to his current pets as

if they were people. Whenever he tells an incident involving his animals, dogs or otherwise, he usually attributes spoken words to them. Not only does dialogue help bring a narrative to life, but it also provides a less cumbersome way to characterize and helps the narrator remember the tale.

A noticeable characteristic of Willard's when he is quoting dialogue is his repetition of "said" and "says." He repeats these several times, even when quoting only one person's words. In his story about the fight between Grassy Jim and Luke Triplett, he quotes the doctor: "And he come and looked at him, said, 'Well,' said, 'there's nothin' I can do.' Said, 'You sewed him up as good as I could'" (Narrative 2). Willard may feel that it is necessary to repeat "said" so his audience will know that he is still quoting the character's words and not narrating the tale. This repetition may also give him a chance to think ahead, in much the same way that many people use "well," "you know," and "I mean." This is not an uncommon trait among oral narrators: Richard Dorson writes: "Often oral narrators inject 'say' several times during one quoted conversation . . ." (Folklore: Selected Essays 113). Willard and his cousin Arnold tell the story of Aunt Beck Sanders' court case. They both use the same dialogue, complete with the repetition of "said" in exactly the same places. This story was passed down through the family, and it is safe to say that they learned this style of quoting

dialogue by hearing other narrators use it.

Even though Willard's narratives resemble written literature to a degree, they are much less effective when read than when listened to. His many false starts, stops, interjections, and tangled grammar are much less distracting orally than they are on paper. This is because Willard as a character, his experiences, age, appearance, voice, and mannerisms, are more intriguing on the whole than the plots of his narratives. The type of audience suitable to Willard would make a highly-polished, flawlessly-told tale too much like "story hour" in grade school, when the teacher reads to the class. Although his tales have been created and polished to a degree, his mistakes and corrections, if we want to call them that, add an air of spontaneity to something he has told many times.

When I recorded his tales, Willard worked in his wood shop. Most often he sat and whittled on a part for one of his toys, and at times he would get up and use a drill or a power saw, tend to the wood stove, or talk to his dog, telling the story as he worked. Whenever he stopped working, he would hold something, a knife or a piece of wood, in what appeared to be a pose of complete relaxation. Willard does not gesture with his hands, but he likes to have them occupied. When he talks in his house, he puts his hat on and takes it off, holds his cane, lights a cigaret, or takes a pinch of snuff, keeping his hands busy without resorting to gestures. He does not present an

animated face to his audience, and he only occasionally glances at whoever is listening to him. When he wants to make a point, he will look at his listeners with an appropriate expression on his face: amusement, disgust, scorn, amazement. Whenever Willard quotes someone, he changes his voice in an effort to re-create the tone of a surprise or a question.

Willard relies on understatement and a careful progression of details rather than an animated overstatement. His audience is attentive because his plots are intriguing and the story develops in much the same way that the incident originally happened. As a listener, I visualized the events as Willard described them. He makes no attempt to force anything on his audience, and instead seems to delight in understating. He was describing to me the annual fall picnic at his church, and it was obvious that there was a tremendous amount of food available. Instead of trying to impress me with the quantity, he simply said, "And you'll find something to eat there" (Watson 1983). He is also a master at expressing himself with just a few words. When we were talking about his cousin Doc Watson, an acclaimed guitarist and banjo player, Willard told me that Doc can also play the fiddle. I have never heard him play it and said so. Willard responded: "And you won't, neither!" (Watson 1984), clearly indicating that Doc is not about to risk his reputation as a musician by publicly playing the fiddle.

I learned early not to ask Willard questions in the course of a narrative. A question or comment interrupts his thoughts and seems to confuse him. He has to find his place before he can resume, in much the same way a reader would have to after an interruption. Once he starts on a tale, Willard concentrates on what he is saying and seems almost unaware of his audience. He is not hard of hearing, but I always had to repeat a question before he answered it. When he finished a tale, he would always look up and react to those around him.

To fully appreciate Willard as a storyteller, one needs to sit and talk with him, preferably in a small group. From the conversation in general and his own reminiscences, Willard remembers tales that he enjoys telling, and one often reminds him of another. As is the case with most performers, an appreciative audience inspires him to livelier renditions of his narratives, and he has always seemed willing to keep talking as long as someone was willing to stay and listen.

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APPENDIX A

A Word on the Transcriptions

A Word on the Transcriptions

I have tried to make reading these transcriptions as similar as possible to listening to Willard Watson tell his stories. A number of words have been spelled to reflect Willard's pronunciation. As a result, "them" becomes "em," "remember" becomes "'member," "liquor" becomes "likker," "far" and "for" become "fer," and so on. Willard uses "they" instead of the introductory "there," which I have also done in these transcriptions. Since Willard never pronounces the final "g" of the "-ing" ending, I have written it as "-in'." There was no attempt to represent his accent because this would put too much emphasis on the sound rather than on the patterns of his narratives.

I transcribed the recordings word-for-word, even though some parts are obviously not oral narratives. The result is an accurate representation of a conversation with Willard.

APPENDIX B Narrative One

NARRATIVE ONE

Nancy Watson recorded the following conversation during a family gathering at Willard Watson's house. Doc Watson, a cousin of Willard's and a nationally-known musician, has been playing the banjo and Willard has been dancing. Doc sets the banjo aside and they begin talking. They are not exactly swapping tales; Doc mentions incidents and Willard tells the tales. It is obvious that Willard is the story-teller on this occasion. Doc does not try to tell tales; he simply reminds Willard of the incidents and lets him do the talking.

Willard: Now back to them good old days, children. Uh, I'll tell you what's the matter with the people today, and I've saw a lot of human beings in the last years. They've lost the love, now children. They have, now. Back--Arthel knows this, I'm telling the truth--back when we worked for a dollar a day, everybody was just as happy as they could be. And if we wanted to go a-fishiin', Hell, we stopped and went a-fishin'. Went right out of the cornfield and go a-fishin' and stay two or three days at a time, and never thought about it. Go down and stay with Uncle Ben Watson three or four days, a week, and never thought about it.

Now, if you lose one day, you're six months behind. Course now, it don't worry me, but I know, it's true. Folks don't love each other like they used to.

Doc: Willard, who do you reckon ever thought up a cane mill?

Willard: Well, Lord, son, they ain't no telling. They used to make em out of wood.

Doc: Huh?

Willard: They used to make em out of wood.

Doc: Well, what kind of wood did they use?

Willard: They used black gum for the rollers and locust pegs for the cogs. And them old timers cut the cogs out and they put em to where they could tighten em together.

Doc: Son, you've told me something I didn't know before. Now, that's the first time I ever knowed that.

Willard: Yes sir, they used to boil em in pots--boil molasses in pots. And make em--they'd be just as black as they could be. They was something to eat.

Doc: That was blackstrap molasses.

Willard: Yes sir. I'll tell you what I saw.

Doc: How did they turn the black gum rollers around?

Willard: Them old timers had big turnin' lathes. Son, they's one up here--Frank Hodges is gonna do some turnin' on it. That--nobody knows, it could turn porch posts.

Doc: Now, what did they do, put a locust pin through the center of that thing for it to run on?

Willard: Yeah.

Doc: Did they have that thing fixed so they could take that axle out and put another one in if it wore out?

Willard: Yeah, oh yeah. Had to. You see, the sweeps was out of a square post.

Doc: Hewed out with a broad ax?

Willard: Yes sir. Now them old timers, son, could do things as well as they could do em now. They built them there cane mill rollers--they put em in a big turnin' lathe and rolled em down to where they--turned em down till they was smooth, you see.

Doc: Just perfectly round?

Willard: Perfectly round as they could be. Well, you see, when they first put em in this here mill they put a big--let me get you a mind of it. Now they cut a square place through this and they cut a boxin' out of a hemlock knot, and it fitted right up agin this, right here, in the roller. Then they took a--they mortised a hole through there, and they put a big pin through there, and when they got loose they'd just drive that pin up and tighten it at the top and the bottom, you know.

Doc: I'll be doggone.

Willard: Yes sir, that's the way they done it.

Doc: Well, I never would have thought they'd a-had a wooden cane.

Willard: Yes sir. I know of a man that made a little one.

Nancy: Will you show me how to make moonshine?

Willard: Yep. Yes sir. I know how to do that, and if it weren't just for two families in this country, I'd make just a little bit of double-still corn likker. If you're hungry, that's the first thing--

Doc: Son, if you was to make some, I'd shore like to have a bottle.

Willard: I've got some here, a little bit of pure corn likker. I don't know how much, but I've got a--.

That little young-un up here at Gary's got sick and Gary Watson's a fine young man, a young citizen now. I'll give him what he deserves 'cause he'll do what he can. And that Gary's as mean as any copperhead that ever crawled with his belly slick to the ground. But he's honest--he'll do just what he tells you.

Doc: I like Gary.

Willard: I do too. Gary's mean though.

Doc: Yeah, I know. He's as ornery as he can be.

Willard: Yeah, he's just as ornery as he can be, as honest as he can be, but, he loves the females. Yes sir. And Gary'll do just what he tells you. Just as shore as he comes here--he come here about three or four weeks ago and said, "Willard, I'm in a close place." And I said, "Son, I'm gonna--." I knowed where they'd come from. Never comes about me, scarcely ever, 'less they wants something. No sir. Gary stops every once in awhile. Gary, he's got so he comes up every once in a while and sets down and talks wih me.

Yes, sister, I can 'member back when I--you was talkin' about old time stuff. I can 'member the first pair of shoes I ever put on and where they come from.

Nancy: You're kidding!

Willard: Yes sir. In them days they made em, and right around the tip of the shoe here was a little brass cap to keep the young-un from kickin' the toes of the shoes out. And my grandpaw went to--over to Hendrick's Old Stand, and--went by the name of Hendrick's Old Stand. Yeah, just lay her down and rest awhile. [Doc sets his banjo down.]

Doc: I was goin' to let you talk.

Willard: I'd as soon hear ourselves talk as anything. He come back and brought them shoes. And my grandmaw had knit some yarn stockings in the fall of the year after the work was all over with. The wood and everything. And Grandmaw, she went out and got her cards. I've got a--I know where they are at now. I'd set of a night and pick that wool out. They'd wash it, you know. And I'd set it, and she'd set there and card and spin. And she had a basket of a thing made she laid her rolls in. When she'd start cardin' to knit my and Grandpaw's socks in the fall of the year, I'd set there and pick that wool, and if I got sleepy she'd reach over and crack my head with her cards and make me pick it. Right on down.

Well, when that was over with--what I was goin' to tell you about the shoes--the tops of them was so stiff, sister, that it wore a black ring right 'round my ankles

and it got sore. And Grandpaw took his knife, now, and shaved that leather right down right thin. And notched it all the way around. And that's all the pair of shoes I got that winter too. And my grandmaw used to make me, when she'd take me to church--they wore knee britches back them days.

Doc: Well, I hated them things. I had to wear em some when I went to school at Raleigh and gosh-a-mighty I hated them.

Willard: I'd bawl every time she'd put em on me and start to church. I just couldn't stand it every time.

Doc: I just about did. I knowed Old Tanner'd kill me there at Raleigh if I did cry much.

Willard: Oh, you didn't hate it no worse than I did.

I'll tell you another scrape come into this. This is funny and you can hear them words after my hands turn toward the pale sun. I was about the size of that little feller right there. I can 'member it well--I'll never forget that. Uncle Johnny Cardin come by and stayed all night, and I always loved him. And they put me in bed with Johnny, and he give me the eetch [itch].

Doc: Oh, Lord have mercy.

Willard: I just about dug all the hide off down up through here, right up in the insides of your legs.

Doc: That's where it got so bad.

Willard: Yeah.

Doc: I've had her before.

Willard: And Granny, she went and got some red-stemmed ivy and blue stone and some other something, and boiled it all up together. And they had a little old washin' tub. It was homemade, and two of the staves come on up higher than the others did. And they made a handhold in that. Place--a-gettin' me down in front of the fire. It was pretty cold. I just had a shirt and a little old pair of britches on. And Arthel can 'member how the stairs went up at Grandpaw's.

Doc: I reckon I can.

Willard: Granny took me up there and stripped me off and jobbed me in that tub. Grandpaw, he was down in front of the fire. It weren't very long before I--they wasn't no water in that tub 'cause I stomped it out. I got to squallin'. And Grandpaw said, "Why," said, "Lottie," said, "what in the Hell you doin' to that young-un?" Oh, Lord, it just drove the hide up and burnt worse than any--hot water couldn't a-burn worse than that burnt me. And she got me back down and rubbed me up. But it cured it. It cured the eetch on me. I'll never forget that as long as I live. Lord-a-mercy, when she popped me in that--.

Doc: Like the time we put poor Blackie in that tub of sheep dip out there when he had the scratches on him.

Willard: Man alive, young-un, I'm a-tellin' you, you can't imagine.

Doc: He pitched a scream or two when he seen he wasn't

gonna get loose from me atall, and they wasn't no way of gettin' loose. He just give down and stuck his nose up and says, "Ummmmmm."

Willard: No wonder. I don't know what kind of a shine I cut. I cut just about as bad a shine as a young-un could cut now. And, but, I'll never forget that.

Another thing we done back in the olden days. If I had the boards that come off the first little house that I shaved the boards, and carried em down yander under the mountain. And Uncle--Old Man Smith Church took a wagon and went right up that mountain there, right in front of Aunt Annie's then. Went right out over the top of the mountain. Loaded that full of boards fer me. Come right back down off of there and hauled em down here. And Grandpaw helped me shave em there. He said it'd be a lot less waste to haul em. And I blistered my hands in spite of the world. And Grandpaw could just sit there and draw boards all day long. But I blistered my hands. And he come and showed me how to pull the drawin' knife. Put it in his hands. And there's one you've got now, son, that helped do that.

Doc: Yeah. That one got used some. You remember that "Muddy Road" that me and Gaither put on that record?

[Gaither Carlton is Doc's father-in-law, a fiddle player who helped instruct and inspire Doc.]

Willard: Yep.

Doc: Papa was a-drawin' the boards with that old drawin' knife up on top of the mountain to cover that old wood shed

out there, and he started whistlin' that, and I said, "Papa, what is that?" And he said, "Son, that's called the 'Muddy Road,'" and he sung a little verse of it. I never will forget how that tickled me.

Willard: Yes sir. Them good old days is gone.

Back in--Uncle Harrison Miller over here--he'd go through the country. He'd start in the fall of the year with the cane mill and little black yoke steers. And they'd come to my grandpaw's. He'd go plumb through the community, all around, and make up all the molasses. I was little. But they would make me get up, and it'd be cold and frosty. Them old timers come out of the bed. And the cane mill was about as fer from here to the house as from down yander to my hog pen. They'd make me get out there in the frost, and my feet'd get so cold drivin' them little steers around that cane mill--my feet'd get so cold I'd have to run to the house to warm em. And then go back. And the same way with the corn shuckin'.

Doc: Tough on your feet, boy.

Willard: Yes sir, it was.

Doc: Willard, was you here that time--I'll not go into the details of this, because of Nancy here and the young-uns--but was you here that time Daddy hit that dog down here in the road with that ear of corn we was shuckin' here?

Willard: Yep.

Doc: He hit Major. I'll never forget that while I live.

Willard: Neither will I.

I'll never forget, too, me and Uncle Gen'l--that was about the worse scrape that I ever got into in my life. In corn shuckin'. They had a field of corn back here above Levi's, and hauled that down there. You might a-can 'member this. We hauled it all down and piled it up in a pile.

Doc: I was goin' to school at Raleigh, but Momma wrote me about it.

Willard: Hit come a rain--hit come a rain and then turned cold, sister, and blowed snow in that pile of corn. Froze ice all in there. We come--they didn't think now--them days they thought corn would actually ruin, but it won't do it.

Doc: Nope, not and it real cold.

Willard: As long as the shucks' on that corn it's hard to ruin.

Doc: Has to get down in the dirt before it'll ruin.

Willard: Yep. We went up there, sister, went to shuckin' that corn, and built us a big log heap. Built us a big log heap, and when our hands'd get so cold bustin' the ice in the shucks till we shucked that whole pile of corn there.

Doc: Have to go warm em awhile.

Willard: Yeah. We'd go warm em--go warm our hands.

Can you 'member the time, Arthel, I don't know where you was, at Raleigh, or where you was at . . .

Doc: Son, if you're gonna tell about the time you brought

all the corn off the mountain and it was rainin', yes sir!

Willard: Yes sir. Now I'm a-tellin' you.

Doc: I remember you-uns totin' up stairs in that old house, the rain just a-pourin' down.

Willard: And the last trip we made, pulled the front piece out of the sled right in the yard. But I guess he had seventy-five bushels of shelled corn.

Doc: Boy, that was a yoke of steers, buddy, that wouldn't do nothin' but get it. Old Buck and Berry, wasn't it?

Willard: Yeah. Tommy Watson come, Grandpaw Wade come, all the boys then was big enough to help. And I never will forget how the old man Tommy was humped over and he had him a table cloth--had a table cloth, now, off the table, tied around his neck. I can see that a-hangin' down behind his back there like a coattail. Hit just, sister, just a-pourin' rain. It rained all day.

Doc: I mean, it didn't let up, Nancy. You know how it rained when that there Agnes storm come through here? It was just such a rain as that. All day steady, and we had to work in that, gettin' that corn in.

Willard: And when we got to the house--got the last load to the house, to pull the front piece out of the sled, and we got the corn toted up in the loft, it quit rainin'. Never rained another drop all day, and cleared off just as pretty.

Doc: Dad laughed after they was all gone home and said, "Well, we all got wet, but it's in the dry."

Willard: Yeah. Hit's in the dry. Them good old days is gone. We never worried about nothin'.

Doc: I'll tell you another winter that I can remember as much about, I guess. Maybe not as much about, but a whole lot about, as any winter when I was real little. Was when Dad had that rheumatism and was laid up.

Willard: Yes sir. I can 'member that spring. Didn't have enough sense to know it, about breakin' the plow nor nothin'. Uncle Gen'l was down and couldn't--couldn't walk. And I got--went to plowin', in the old house field out there.

Doc: It was what they called sciatica rheumatism, Nancy, that he had.

Willard: He was so--hit hurt him so bad that he couldn't stay in bed.

Doc: He had to lay on the hearth floor.

Willard: He had to lay on the hearth floor. That spring I went to plowin' and had plowed up, and you can 'member it, above the old house place, around above the spring they used to be some big chestnut trees a-standin' there. And I never thought about breakin' the plow, and it was--ground was froze yet. And I pulled up sheets of frozen ground as big as that door with them steers. And Grandpaw said--he was out there, and when I went to pullin' that frozen ground and said, "Ah," said, "Godamighty," said, "you'll break the plow all to pieces!" I never thought about breakin' the plow, you know.

Doc: Them steers, just a-walkin' right on.

Willard: Just walkin'. Charlie'd cut all day and just, he would just plow you till you couldn't get your breath.

Doc: Boy, they was real good. Whoever broke them knowed what they was a-doin'.

Willard: Uncle Gen'l broke em. He was the only man I ever seed on the top side of the earth that could keep a sled in a ten-acre field. He could drive a sled through a auger whole.

One time, me and Charlie, Uncle Gen'l--this is goin' back, children. I love them good old days, though. I know how much we had on the sled--eighteen shocks of corn cut off and shocked together. I don't reckon you've ever seed it. Hit was so wide, sister, when we was a-comin' through a pair of bars. Charlie Carroll was with us. And it went to pullin' up the bar post, and Charlie run around to Uncle Gen'l and said, "Gen'l," said, "wait!" Said, "You're movin' Hell back here!" I'll never forget that while I live. Just took the bar postes and all when it went.

One got choked one time. We was haulin' corn from off the mountain up here, and all at once--Uncle Gen'l knowed what he was doin'. I was married and had a family, two or three young-uns, I don't know how many. And Uncle Gen'l just stopped that right quick and said, "Get the yoke off of him! Get the yoke off of him!" And that old red berry steer, sister, when he took a notion to get an ear of corn, you's just as well tied the rope around this house--none

a-tooked to move it to stop him from a-goin' to get an ear of corn. He'd go get it. And I run around and jerked the yoke off of him. Me and Uncle Gen'l jerked the yoke off of him, and said, "Run him off that bank there!" You 'member that bad crooked curve used to be as you went up to Tommy's on the old road?

Doc: Yes sir. I know right where that's at.

Willard: We was comin' right down into the road right there. He said, "Run him off the bank there! Run him off the bank there!" I struck the steer and made him--he jumped off that bank and struck down in the row, and an ear of corn 'bout that long flew out of his mouth. Now them good old days is gone, young-un.

Doc: They knowed how to take care of their teams, Nancy, and look after em. He'd a-choked to death right there. He'd a-died.

Willard: And he had one time, they called Buck and Berry. Now this was theses' name, but that was back when I was a young-un. And one of em would run away. We was plantin' corn up here at the old house place. I believe Uncle Gen'l lived there. And Grandpaw Wade was doin' something with it, and he had a--yeah, I 'member that--he had a lay-off plow to em. And he got scared at something or 'nother, and they was a big pair of bars down there. And when that steer cleared that bar, jumped that pair of bars, the plow caught the two top bar rails. Just took em on with him. Broke the bars all to pieces. Grandpaw says, "By God!"

says, "he'll stop somewhere." I'll never forget that as long as I live.

Doc: Willard, do you remember that one that Wade was workin' that he never did like, and he worked him till he was about two years old, and one day he made up his mind he wasn't gonna work no more. And he broke loose from Wade and tore out of the harness or something, or tore loose from his load, and Wade said, "Stop him, Gen'l!"

Willard: Yeah. "Head him, Gen'l!" I 'member that just as plain as if it'd been yesterday. Uncle Phineas was with us too. Phineas said, "By God!" said, "I'll knock him down if he comes this way!" I'll never forget that while I live.

Doc: That thing never would work no more after that, would he?

Willard: No sir. Never could do nothin' with it. He let him get away from him right there. A bull's awful stubborn anyway.

Doc: Yeah. It made up its mind it didn't have to work in the harness no more.

Willard: I heared Grandpaw tell this, I didn't see it. Now that was before I was hatched. Uncle Joe Sanders lived right up here where Sid lives now. And they had a young yoke of cattle there they wanted to break. And they had the lines on several times, you know. And Granadpaw said they was a small apple tree there, and Uncle Joe was a-gettin' a whole lot of age on him . . . [End of Tape]

APPENDIX C

Narrative Two

NARRATIVE TWO

Nancy Watson recorded the following conversation in 1975 at Willard Watson's home. At the time she was interested in collecting enough information to put together a history of the Watson family. A cousin of Nancy's and Willard's wife, Ora, are sitting around listening to Willard talk.

Willard: And I was tellin' the boys this mornin' that Rupe Greene--now that was forty, would be fifty years ago in October--we was puttin' the first sewage line right down the center of Boone. And we was a-doin'--we didn't have no back-end loader. We was a-takin' it out with picks and shovels, what we brought it out with. And we was a-ditchin' right along agin Hunt's Department Store, right in front of that. And her dad and mother, her mother's gone, and her dad didn't want me to have all that mess. And he planned it out. I had a friend--she's still livin', both of em's still livin' that was witnesses at my weddin'. Was Billy Benson and Frony Miller, on Elk. And Billy is in a rest home somewhere in Boone. And that mornin' we let it get out that we was a-gonna get married the next Saturday. And we was a-gonna get married on Monday. But we let it get out in the wind that we was a-gonna get married the

next following Saturday. On Monday mornin' I was standin' right agin--right on the corner where the Five and Ten Cent Store is at. Standin' right agin a big light post. And this here thing I've got here, she got off of the truck and come walkin' across the street. There's no street, then, no hard top. She come walkin' across the street, smilin'. I said, "Well," said, "let's go get it over with."

Me and her walked right on up to the courthouse. When we got to the courthouse, Frank Welch happened to be standin' there, and he said, "Well," said, "let's go and get em."

I went in--didn't think--come out. About the time we come out Frank did and reached me that farewell trip paper. Marshall Watson come walkin' in the courthouse and said, "All right," said, "just give em here." Said, "Let's just go on and get this mess over with." I just laughed and said, "Here they are." Cost me two dollars and a half.

We wound up right in front of the bar in front of the old courthouse. And Billy Benson--he said, "Billy," said, "Billy, you and Frony come on." I'll never forget what Billy Benson said as long as the days I stay here. He said, "Frony," he said, "sign these licenses here." Frony said--she signed my license, said, "Billy, sign these." And Billy said, "Yes, sign this on the dotted line below." And that was hit, fifty years ago the fifth day of October.

Now you want to go back into some of that old stuff like Harrison Miller, my granddad, and all them I can 'member well. Uncle Harrison Miller was an oldtimer lived over here and he went through in the fall of the year and made up all the molasses in the country. Go from one place to another. And I didn't have no shoes and I'd get out there of a mornin'. And he had little black-yoked cattle. I can see that cane mill and them cattle just as plain as I can see that right there. My feet would get so cold I would run to the house and warm my feet and go back and drive them little steers all day long, till they got the molasses all made up.

Well, when they got the molasses made up, they would always come a bunch in--Uncle Dory, Carter, and your granddad, great-granddad I reckon in a way. They'd always come with their fiddles and banjers. And they'd move all out of the house out in the yard. Now they call em square dances. They called em shindigs them days. That's the old name fer em, an old shindig. And they'd play. Always had a little booze. Never seed nobody drunk--nobody never got drunk, but they'd all warm up a little taste of that stuff. And here they'd go, and they'd play maybe up till daylight the next mornin'. Take everything back into the house, go on. Nobody--no trouble nor nothin'.

Corn-shuckin' time come in the fall of the year. They would gather the corn, haul it in and pitch it in a big pile. And I can 'member, they set a small jug of whiskey

right in the corn pile, and whoever shucked to that jug first got the first drink out of it. And when they got the corn all shucked, they would take it every bit up before the neighbors left. They'd put the corn away, put it up. Put the shucks up, feed their cows, in the wintertime.

Then wood gettin'. I'll never forget this, children, and that weren't yesterday. They'd always start in the fall of the year when they got their corn and crops all gathered in. Next thing they done was get em enough wood to last em through the winter. Always kept a heavy yoke of cattle there at my grandpaw's. And they hauled up a big--oh, they just--they put the big wood on the bottom and they'd pile up the little wood as they could handle it. And they was a big forked sweetnin' apple tree, and they'd always pile that wood agin that apple tree.

And one evenin' down late they had a bunch of sheep a-runnin around the house--I don't know, ten or twelve head of sheep. My mother was always in fer some fun or 'nother. Aunt Isabel, she was there. And Momma said to Aunt Isabel, said, "Isabel," said, "let's put a sack over one of them sheeps' heads and get to see how funny it would do." That was the funniest thing you ever seed, but the laughin' turned the other way after awhile. That sheep went right to that woodpile, and a sheep's awful bad to climb up on something. It took right up that there woodpile, come to the fork of that tree. It was about seven or eight, maybe ten feet on the lower side, back side of that forked apple

tree. The sheep went right through the fork of that apple tree, and when it fell it broke its neck. My mother come and humped down to me and told me, said, "Don't you tell Grandpaw that that sheep had a sack on its head." Said, "If you do," said, "he'll kill us all." Well, I didn't want nobody killed, you know. Aunt Isabel, she went in the house and hunted the butcher knife. Cut that sheep's throat after it quit kickin'. She cut its throat.

Got up an old lantern and went up in the field, up in the old house field up there where Arnold's water comes from now. They called that the Gen'l place, the old house field--that's what went by the name of that. I've been in it. Uncle Gen'l's boy Rosseau was borned there in it, and Uncle Gen'l carried Aunt Nannie out of there in the time of the flood. Carried her out of there on his back. And they went up there and took an old oil lantern. Told Grandpaw and Uncle Irv that sheep gone up the woodpile and broke its neck. Grandpaw said--when he come--he said, "By God, Irv," said, "we'll have some mutton."

It was down in the fall and it was cool. And they dressed out that mutton. I can see that yet just as plain as if it'd a-been yesterday. That sheep was just solid covered in fat, taller [tallow]. And they dressed that sheep out and nobody never--he never knowed that until he went to sleep. And when he--when Grandpaw died, I told that.

And your Grandmaw Nannie, and this is back too, in the old days. Aunt Nannie was a young woman, and oh she was young, hadn't been married too long I think. But, anyhow, I was a small little boy. And Uncle Gen'l now was the cause of this, but he'll never--he never knowed it, nor won't never know it because he ain't comin' back and I ain't a-gonna tell him. Over from the front of the old house place to the big Virginia Beauty apple tree. And Uncle Gen'l went and skinned some hickory bark, now, and made a swing out of it. And it was--they, him and Aunt Nannie swung on this swing the day before that. Well, this hickory bark dried, and Aunt Nannie put me in that swing and swung me a time or two. And she was a big heavy woman too, then. And she got in it and swung a time or two in it. And when she swung the last time, that broke and she fell right flat on her back on the ground. She got up and put her hands back there and said, "Willard," said, "I've hurt my back." She said, "Don't you tell Granny and Gen'l I was in that swing." And that's hurt that woman from that day till this. And I never did tell that till Uncle Gen'l was done dead and gone. And I was a little bitty boy.

Nancy: I bet that's what made her arthritis so bad.

Willard: I don't know what, but anyhow, her back hurt her since she was young, she was about eighteen, maybe twenty. And that was before--she didn't have no children. Huh uh. She didn't have no children then. No, they didn't have any children. And that's hurt that woman from then till now.

I can 'member, young-uns, the first pair of shoes I ever put on my feet. How proud I was of them! Over here where Glen Cook's store used to be. They called it the Old Hendrick's Stand. Old Man Lynn Hendricks had a store there and they was only one store there. And out here they called it the Walker Stand. Now that--and that store there and this one over here was the only two stores in the country. And the next closest store was the Colder's Old Stand down yander on Gap Creek. Down--hit's over in Ashe, this is. It was down, way on down below Ed Mort's, and they called it the Walker Stand. My granddad went over to Lynn Cook's and he said to my grandmaw, that mornin', he said, "I'm a-gonna go get this young-un a pair of shoes."

Well, he went on, and when he come back they had a little copper plate put right around the toe of em. And you only got one pair. And them shoes, they was hard around the top here, and them's hurt my ankles. And he took a knife and cut that thin right around that top of that, and took his knife and put little notches down in it, to keep that from hurtin' my ankles. And, oh how proud I was of them little shoes.

But let me tell you, young-uns, from then till now they's been many changes. They's been many changes in Boone now. All down through there where the Holiday Inn's at--I've rabbit hunted all through that country. Not two houses in that country. And that was a--I'll tell you when I come back.

They was an old man they called Luke Triplett--that was as fer back as I ever could 'member.

Ora: Luke Triplett was my great-grandpaw on my mother's side. You didn't know that, did you?

Willard: That's the reason you a-stayin' so long. He was a hundred and four when he died, and cancer just eat his head off before it killed him. And--Old Luke was--I went down to the--right down from where I was raised at out here. They used to be a little old log house down there, and Uncle Phineas and Aunt Nannie, uh, Aunt Alice lived in that one. And they come a wind storm and blowed the whole top of the house off. Just parted it back. Old Man Luke was in a side room--they call it a ell or side room--in the bed. Grandpaw and Uncle Phineas went after him. I can 'member Grandpaw and Uncle Phineas, a-seein' em go out of sight on the fringe of the lot out there with a lantern. They's a-goin' after Grandpaw Luke. He could walk. And I stood there and watched that lantern go out of sight. And, a little while they come back. And he wouldn't come wih em. Said, "Nah," said, "just let Grandpaw alone." Said, "It ain't gonna bother him." Done blowed the top of the house off, but he stayed right there, wouldn't come out. And that is as fer back as I ever could 'member. In this little log cabin he was a-settin' by the fireplace, and his head was just as white as snow. And he had an old jump jacket spread around him--round his shoulders, settin' humped up in the corner by the little old fireplace. And

that's as fer back now as I can 'member anything about Luke Triplett.

But I didn't see this, but I heared my granddad and grandmother tell this differences of times. His daddy, now, Luke's daddy, was called Grassy Jim. And why they called him Grassy Jim, they found him, in the grass. The mother throwed him down. When she had him, she dropped him. She dropped him, she throwed him down.

Ora: In a grassy swamp, didn't she?

Willard: Yeah. They brought him out of there and raised him. And he was a-makin' an old-time steer collar out of shucks. Now if a man had somebody that could work one of them, now, he could shore get a price fer it. He had some likker. Old Man Grassy had some likker up in a little old building, and Luke wanted some of it, and Old Grassy wouldn't give him none of it. And he said, "I'm goin' after it." And he said, "You go up there, I'll kill you." Now I didn't see this, but I heared my grandpaw tell it lots of times. He started up after that whiskey, and he had a little old collar knife--they called it a collar knife he was a-makin' this collar with. And he struck Old Man Luke on this hip bone over here and pulled her plumb across him and his bowels just rolled out. He just picked em up. And Old Granny Cassie, I think was her name. They went down to a spout, washed em, washed the gravel off of em and dirt. Put em back in, brought him up, brought him back into the house. And got him up some old black thread

and sewed him up. Sent fer Old Doctor--some old doctor back over here after she got through whangin' him up. Sent fer this old doctor to come. And he come, and looked at him. Said, "Well," said, "there's nothin' I can do." Said, "You sewed him up as good as I could." And he was a hundred and four when he died. Now that was bein' tough. That was bein' tough now. One get cut that bad this time, he'd die before you could lay it down. That's all you'd have to do. You'd just stretch the body out 'cause he'd be dead before he hit the ground.

But now all such as that, children, has done gone by. But now that's about as fer back as I could ever 'member seein' him. And he never carried a whuppin' during the lifetime he was here. And my grandpaw told me he helped dress the body of him. And he said they was scars on that man from his ankles to his chin, and part of one of his ears.

Old Gil Hendricks--they used to be a man by the name of Gil Hendricks, and every time they got together, that's when they--Gil would say, "Luke, I can whup you." And Luke would say, "Gill, you can't do it." They'd pull off their clothes all exceptin' their pants. And they was somewhere when this started. Grandpaw and Granny Bets, I believe it was her name. Granny Bets stepped between Gil and Luke, tryin' to not get em to fight. And they--Luke struck Gil above the hatbrim up there with his fist. He said the hair and his hat just fell down. And said--Gil said he could

whip the man part of Luke, but he couldn't the dog part of you. And he said he couldn't whup the dog part of you, said Luke'd just eat him up, that was all.

And time ain't like they used to be. But now we're goin' on a little bit--now that was back down the road. Now I can 'member when old Cleonard Greene saw-milled out here down under the mountain at old Uncle Phineas' place. Them days the law weren't so bad as it is now agin white whiskey. But they didn't know anything about poison whiskey. They didn't know how to make it--poison. And the Old Man Cleonard Greene would bring--he didn't bring just two or three bushels. He went to Lawrence Evver's daddy's over on Stony Fork and just hauled a wagon load of pure corn ground corn meal.

Around from the house they had the outfit set up. And one day me and Charlie and Virgil and Sally found this rig. And the still was so big that me and Charlie and Virgil and Sally all got and went down in that still. And it was just as bright inside as a brand new penny--it was solid copper. And they run that there right on and on and on. And I'll tell you one on your Grandpaw Paine directly. But they eventually cut it down. They eventually cut that down.

They didn't know nothin' about sugar likker nor nothin'. They didn't know nothin' about a steamer. All they knowed about was the double-still corn likker. That's all they done. And it was pure. They sprouted the malt. And my grandpaw sold em a lot of rye that went through that

still. Now, what they made then would do to drink it. It wouldn't kill you. Now, I'll take a drink of whiskey yet if I want it. If I don't I'm big enough to let it alone. But I'll know where it comes from. You get some whiskey that's run through a radiator, it's just liable to kill you, kill you just like that. [Snaps his fingers.]

I been here a long time. I'll take a drink and I don't care who knows it. Tell the preacher I would, if I wanted him to know. Yeah. I'll drink a drink of whiskey. And I make some wine--keep some wine year around. And I never a bit more go about that scarcely once in a while.

When I got sick here awhile back I got a-hold of the flu. I told em I didn't have the flu--the flu had me. I stayed in the house. I was out of the house twice in a week, and whenever I stay in the house they's something wrong. And bad wrong, too. And I told em I drunk everything I could find, and if somebody else'd named something else I'd a-drink it if I could a-found it.

And there was nary a thing in the world, folks, never hurt me, not a pain one in my body, but I just kept gettin' weaker and weaker. And I come out of it though.

Goin' back now, I'm gonna tell you one on Grandpaw Paine. You can't 'member how they used to do down in there. They used to drink. Preacher Bynam went and got a five-gallon can, back when he drunk it. But when he quit, he quit. Uncle Bynam wouldn't--nothin' but the best. And he had the finest milk cow I've ever seed. He took that

cow into the house and give her apples off the dresser. That's what whiskey'd do fer you, now. Claude Paine, your Grandpaw Claude used to be--Hell, he was heavy. And they come some boys along one day, and the Old Man George--they called him Pencil-Nose George, now, that's what his name was. I don't know you ever heared that before or not.

Ora: That was Grandmaw Chaney's husband.

Willard: You're right. And his little nose come out there and it was just as sharp as it could be. Called him Pencil-Nose George. That's what they called him. And somebody come along one day with some likker, and they all got to drinkin'. Old Man George, he got warmed up pretty good. And the boys that had the likker was a-gonna leave. I don't know who the boys was now--Bynam was into it. And the Old Man Paine went into the house, and he always called Chaney "Mother." He said, "Mother Paine," said, "George is a-leavin'." He said, "When the likker's gone," he said, "George'll come back." Never went back home till he helped drink every bit of it.

Oh, they was awful how they used to--Ralph and your Grandpaw Paine down through there--used to make it. It was pitiful. It was awful. But now, that Bynam used to be a pure ox, but they say he's almost gone now. They say he's pitiful. I went to see him when he was in Blowing Rock, but I don't want to see him anymore. [End of Tape]

APPENDIX D

Narrative Three

NARRATIVE THREE

I recorded the following conversation January 17, 1984.

Willard Watson is in his workshop making a toy sled. He talks while he carves, occasionally using his power drill and saw, stopping to pet his dog and tend the fire in the stove. The roosters are crowing on the porch. This is the first time I recorded Willard, although I had visited him several times earlier. I asked him to tell me about the early days of the Watson family. This was all the prompting he needed.

Willard: The Old Man Tom, Granddaddy Tom, we always called him, he was the beginnin' settler in this country. And he settled a lotta land in here--all through here. Now this Granddaddy Tom that lived down here, that was his daddy, and they called him Granddaddy Tom. And where that generation of people come from, I can't tell you because that's too fer back fer me. But I can 'member well how they lived--how they lived and how they done, and you take the way they done, now, they done different to what the young folks does now.

The first thing they done in the fall of the year after they got their crops [pause] I can 'member how they'd

do. My granddaddy always kept a big yoke of oxens, and when fall come, after they got their corn all harvested in, gathered in, they would start gettin' their winter's wood. And there at the old home place where I was raised, they was a big sweet apple tree, old time sweet apple tree, and the hardest tree to climb I ever knew to climb, but I climbed her a time or two.

And when they'd get their crops all done up, they'd go to gettin' wood, and they'd get em enough wood to last em through the winter. And when come a pretty day like today, they'd--I weren't big enough to saw nothin', but I was big enough to carry wood in. Always carried the wood, and my grandmother had some old time baskets there, and they chopped the most of the wood. They'd chop it with a ax, and she'd pick up the chips and set em on the porch in baskets, fer bad weather.

And me and my granddad--I was big enough to go with him--went back down through here, always went and hunted some rich pine, fat pine you call it. I've got a block settin' over here, and I've got a maul I turned out of one.

I've got a maul right here. [Hands me the maul.] I turned that out of a rich pine knot, come from the same place that did.

David: You can put a match to this wood and it'll just light up.

Willard: Oh yes, it burns. We always went and got some wood, fat pine they called it, bring it back to the house,

in the old home place. I can see it just as plain if it'd been yesterday. We always kept a little box settin' right by the fireplace. And he'd split him up a bunch of that pine, kept it in that little box, and a box of matches would last him, oh, right on and on. And they used to be an old store out here called Walker's Stand. That's just as fer back as I can 'member. And he'd go out there and get him a gallon of kerosene oil, and they would--that gallon of kerosene oil would last right on and on for the lamps, you know, in the house.

When bedtime come he went to bed, and in the mornin' part of the day he'd come out of there, And I didn't lay in the bed like the young folks does now. They was something to do, and I had to come out of there.

Durin' the time of this now they used to make molasses. And they used to be an old feller over here by the name of Harrison Miller. And he'd go all over the community, all over the country, and make molasses fer the folks. He got a certain amount. He got the tenth gallon. I 'member what they give him. The tenth gallon fer makin' molasses. And down towards the house they was a hill, and Uncle--always called him Uncle Harrison--and he had a little black yoke of cattle that he ground cane with. And I can hear that molassey boiler--they call em pans now--they called that--then they called em a molassey boiler. And I can hear that comin' down that hill, that a-bumpin' in the wagon.

Well, when they got there and got all set up, it was about a hundred and fifty yards from the house. I had to come out of there, and I didn't have no shoes neither. I can 'member it. And it would be cold and frosty, you know.

And I had to drive them little steers, them little steers around that cane peeler. And my feet'd get cold and I'd run to the house to warm my feet. Come right back out. I had to. They didn't do like the young-uns does now. When he told me to do anything, I knowed he--I had to do it.

Well, from there, then, after the molassey makin' was all up and everything--before that now, when they gathered their corn in, they always gathered their corn, hauled it in and piled it up, and they'd have a corn shuckin'. And them days they had something to do with drink. They always put--anyhow from a half a gallon to a gallon of pure corn likker in the corn pile. And whoever got shucked to it first got the first drink of it. Nobody didn't get drunk--they never got drunk.

When they got the corn all shucked, they'd put it up--put the shucks away. They always kept the shucks to feed the cows, cattle. And then, when that was [pause] happened, then they started gettin' their winter's wood. They didn't quit till they had enough piled up in the yard, and it come a day like this, they chopped--chopped the wood with a ax, my grandpaw would. And then, they didn't worry about nothin'. Never worried about nothin' to eat.

In the fall, my grandmother, I've seed her do this many times. They didn't have no freezer, nothin' like that, and she'd dry up during peach time now. They'd dry peaches and dry peaches in a bag. Durin' the winter they'd cook them peaches and dried fruit, and they'd put em in a crock--called it a crock. They was made--probably some company made em. I've got an old five-gallon stone jug up here, and it says five gallons right on it too. Nobody knows on earth how old it is, and I don't either, but I do know where it come from. I found it in an old house. And me and Arnold out here--we was--he--I believe he was a-cuttin' timber. Anyhow, we went over to that old house. I always love to go to an old house, just plunder 'round in it. I found a book in there. The woman that owned the home, does own it yet, I reckon, as fer as I know. She was a school teacher, and the floor was just full of books. And I picked one--I believe I got two of em. I picked one of em up, and looked through it, and it had the old time multiplication tables in it. And I know where it's at now.

David: The book?

Willard: Yes sir. My granddaughter, my granddaughter's got it. And I told her when she's up here--she lives in South Carolina--I told her the next time she comes up here to bring that. It didn't have no business down there. And it might--somebody might get it. I would never get it back.

On this old stone jug, I carried that on my belt till it wore a patch. Oh, it just liked to wore the hide off. And I brought her in then.

So then, people don't--young folks don't realize and know what it would take to live. And they was just as happy as they could be, and she would dry in the fall--they had plenty of apples out there, plenty of peaches, and they'd dry some peaches. And they would take them dried fruit, cook em, put em in an old--and keep several days. They wouldn't rot. They wouldn't sour nor nothin', in the wintertime. And she'd dry pumpkins. I can see the rim. She'd cut it at the rim, and hang em on little sticks over the fireplace, and hit would dry. When they got dry, she'd always take em down and put em in a paper bag of some kind. You could get a few paper bags then. And she'd always take care of stuff like that. And now, the young generation, they'd laugh at you. Yes sir. They'd laugh at you.

And I can 'member the first pair of shoes I ever put on. Could 'member where they come from. They used to be an old store over here. They was only three stores in the country. And one was out here just down 'round the curve there where you turned in. They called it the Walker Stand. Well, this one over here where my shoes come from, they called it the Hendricks' Stand. Man by the name of Leonard Hendricks. And I know where his son lives now. He comes to see me every once in a while. I went to school a little--what I went--with him. Hooper Hendricks and

Nattie. They went to school down here at this old schoolhouse. The old church house and the school was together.

Old Granddaddy Tom, now. we was talkin' about him. He used to own this all through here, plumb on down. And they was another generation that they called George. George, and his wife was named Cassie. And he owned it from there on down, plumb on out of Stony Fork, plumb on down.

David: Was he a Watson too?

Willard: Yeah. Old Man George, but he was a different generation to this Watson--our generation, Old Tom. And he raised a bunch of--raised a big bunch of boys down there. I can 'member all their names. My granddad, and Uncle Sid now, he was the hunter of the outfit. He hunted. And the rest done the work. And I heared my grandpaw tell this differences of times. They handled things different to what they do now. And some done one thing, and some done another, you know. Old Man Granddaddy Tom, he never done nothin', only set on the porch. That's what he done. And the young-uns did the work.

Now Uncle Gen'l out here, who lived on the mountain, Arnold's daddy, he come up through it too. And, but nobody knows where the generation come from.

Now back out through this section of the country here, they was two feuds over different--they was-- they was a man by the name of David Ike, David Ike Watson. They was always into a lawsuit over something or 'nother, you know.

Him and Aunt Beck Sanders, now, that lived up here, she was a Watson too. She was the oldest. She was the old generation of the Watsons. She was some related to Granddaddy Tom down here. And they got into a lawsuit over a piece of land somewhere or 'nother. Her and Old David Ike did. And they was another one, they was one other one they called Cage, Cage Watson. And that was another gen--that was another different generation. But the Old Man Granddaddy Tom down here, he was the beginnin' corner of all this land through here, plumb on down. Owned it all, plumb on down to the Old Man George, now that was another generation, went into Ike Watsons. He owned it from here plumb on down to the Old Man George's, and then George owned it from there on. And they called it--they's a place down there yet that they call George's Lower Place. And I been where it's at--I know where it's at.

And used to be an old mill down there, used to have a mill. Everybody went to the mill, only mill there was anywhere in the country. And so, when they done that--well, it was just like Aunt Beck Sanders, now, she was a Watson. And she was a leader of the country. She had where she could--folk, everybody went to her, you see, fer something.

And my granddad--and I heared him tell this differences of times, said him and Uncle Avery, that was his brother, one of the set as them old timers used to say. And they was a-grubbin' up here on top of the mountain fer

twenty-five cents a day. I heared him tell this, twenty-five cents a day to pay their taxes. And it was foggy, and they didn't know nothin' about Aunt Beck a-bein' nowhere, and they was tired. And she went up there, and Uncle Avery stopped and looked up--it was foggy. And she was a-standin' there, said, "You needn't look up!" Said, "It ain't dinnertime yet! And that's just how, now, I heared my grandpaw tell it. And it made Uncle Avery mad. Just laid his mattock on his back and left. Never would work another day fer her atall.

And when she went away, and she had this--I heared him tell it, now, I didn't see it--that somewhere that she had half a gallon pot full of gold coins. Now that was Old Beck. And they never did know what went with that.

And my granddad chewed tobaccer worse than a--he was just as bad a 'baccer worm you ever seed. And he chewed homemade tobaccer all the time. And they had some barrels there--I've heared him tell this differences of times--they had some barrels there, and they'd hand this tobaccer, when--they called it case--when it got just right, they'd hand it off and pack it in them barrels. And during the time of this--I heared him tell this--Warren, now that was Warren, that was her son, and he sent fer Grandpaw to come out there, and told him come out there, had some tobaccer he'd give him after Aunt Beck died, you know. She sold it all the time. And--nickel a twist, I 'member what it brought. And so he went out there and he said in--when

they give him tobaccer, in that tobaccer he said was the mice had cut up that greenback money in there. Yes sir. Greenback in there. And so that--them old timers, they didn't care.

Used to be a feller out here they called Big Tom, Big Tom Watson. He handled cattle all his life. He'd gather up the cattle. They called him Big Tom. Called him Cow-Buying Tom; that's what they called him, Cow-Buying Tom. I can 'member seein' him. He'd get up maybe twenty-five or thirty head of cattle, and drive em from here to Hickory. Drive em from here down to Hickory. And that was the closest railroad station that they was in this country then at that time. They called it Hickory Station. They's a train come to Hickory and they called it the Hickory Station. And they'd go there, the old timers would, and buy their salt and everything like that fer the next year. And they'd go down across the Yadkins River, and they was gone sometimes two weeks--two weeks to make the trip.

But now this generation--they's--I don't know, they's a--they's a generation now--[His dog, Bozo, comes up for attention, pawing at Willard's leg.]--well now, I don't want to fool with you this morning. You is just as good as you can be. Just go over yander and lay down and behave yourself.

And they was two or three generations--they was a generation they called Parks--Parks Watson. Now that was

another generation. Aunt Beck and Parks got into a lawsuit--I've heared Grandpaw tell this--he was into it somehow or another--I don't know. They had a lawsuit, and when the lawsuit was over, they come out on--they was a-standin' talkin', you know, like a bunch of old timers would. And Aunt Beck, she raised up and said, "They didn't give me justice in there!" And the Old Man Parks that was agin to it with the lawsuit, he said, "Goddrot ye!" Said, "If they'd a-give ya justice," said, "they'd a-sent ya to Hell!" Now that was an old timer said it. Said, "Goddrot ye! If they'd a-give ya justice they'd a-sent ya to Hell!" Now that's just as old as you can find it.

But them good old days is gone, gone, and I ain't got it yet. American people today--my way of seein' em and I've been here a right smart spell, more than I will be. American people today is a-standin' in the worst shoes they've ever stood in. Yes sir. If things don't change, and I don't see no road leadin' away from it. If they don't change, American people's gonna face one of the worst times they've ever faced. I went through that other Depression. I was little--a hundred and sixty-two pounds is the most I ever weighed in my life, and I weigh a hundred and thirty pounds. Told me I got to be a heavyweight then. But now I'll tell you, there's something ahead fer American people.

David: Why do you think we're in such a state?

Willard: What I think what'll do with it? Japan'll buy it

some of these days. Yes sir. And another thing--watch this--and you're young enough to see this. And it tain't too fer away--now you're young enough to see this. Some day, and it ain't--it ain't no miles away neither--it's workin' every day. There'll be a race war here in the United States between the Blacks and the Whites. It's a-comin'. No way out of it because--I'll tell you why. They have--when they give em freedom--Old Abraham Lincoln's I think's the man that took--turned em loose. Do you reckon they ever think of bein' under bondage? I seed a thing--I know where he lives now and he's got it. He had a thing just like a deed where they made it, and that's the only one I've ever seed. And he lives up here or did--his home's up here in a little log house up on the hill. And he had one of them that was made--was sold--the colored folks was sold and he had a thing just like a deed. Bill of sale. Now, I don't know. Hit's comin', though. And they're gettin'--they're gettin' an awful, an awful holt and they're--and the Whites don't realize and see what's comin'. Now that's comin'. Hit ain't too--hit ain't too fer away.

I was noticin' the President last night I believe it was. One man can't only do so much. You can do what you can and that's all you can do. And I don't know--I said--I firmly--if you get--if the people's crazy enough we'll have a colored president. If we ain't mighty careful. And when we do, we're gone. Because you realize and know now--now

down there in Charlotte you've got a colored mayor down there. Now you know in your mind and in your head that they're gonna lean toward them. Yes sir. They're gonna lean toward the colored.

And I was in a slave graveyard up in Virginia and in a place they call Crockett Cove, and an old man owned that place in there--they called it Crockett Cove--owned it. And owned the slaves. It's pitiful. They was fences there fer--I couldn't tell you how fer. And I helped cut the timber now off the slave graveyard. And helped cut it--and they was a--they would carry rock from that size on up to as big as they could carry. And they built fences--they built a fence fer I don't know how fer there--just the slaves did. Now that was the best marker I ever seed--that there. In that Crockett graveyard. And up on the mountain--up on the mountain above where they's at--that's where they buried all the slaves. And I couldn't tell you--they was a--they was over--I'll say they was as much as two acres of slave graveyard there. Cause that's comin' now.

Goin' back to this and talkin' about Old Man Granddaddy Tom. He settled out here on the mountain right to the side of where Arnold lives. That's the startin' corner now of the generations. And I can member myself the rock pile where the chimney was at, and I've got a picture of it in the house.

David: The log cabin?

Willard: Yes, I do. The little cabin was there. And--but nobody knows--I don't know where it come from. Yeah, I know where it come from, but I don't know where he got it at. Some feller made that picture and sent it to me, from New York. How he got a-hold of it I don't know. And so that wound up the generation of that generation. But now, so fer as knowin' any further down--now I can 'member--

David: Tell me about Grassy Jim.

Willard: They found him. Somewhere about Deep Gap, up through that place there. He was in grass and they found Grassy Jim in that medder.

David: He was a baby?

Willard: Yes sir, he was a baby. Nobody knows where he come from, only they just called him Grassy Jim. I think Old Man Parks, now--that was a different generation to Granddaddy Tom down here--I think the Old Man Parks found him. Found him and they called him Grassy Jim. I've heared my grandpaw tell it now. They didn't know where he come from. They didn't know who he was. They just called him Grassy Jim Watson. [This is an error on Willard's part--Grassy Jim was adopted by a Triplett. He knows this, but for some reason today he called him a Watson. Later he said, "All those Triplettts from Grassy Jim on down were crazy."]

And they used to be an old feller lived out here by the name of Mann. Now that was another generation. And I can 'member seein' him, and lived out just as you cross the

top of the hill comin' in up that first hill there. He lived down in the field there in a little old shack. And, so fer as knowin' where that generation come from--nobody knows.

David: Wasn't Grassy Jim a Cherokee Indian?

Willard: I don't know that now. That's all I know. Only just know they found him and--somewhere, they used to be all up through Deep Gap here--used to be in farm land and medders and things. And they found him in there and he went by the name of Grassy Jim Watson. And that's all. Because they--Old David Ike was the one found him. Named him Watson, and they called him Grassy Jim Watson.

Now another thing that I'm not in favor of one bit. I never have been and never will be. The Indian people that we have, and I've been through several different Indian reservations. I've been in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Been in that one there, and I been in Cherokee, and I been in that--I believe it's the Navajo in Arizona. Now they live there in dirt houses, yes sir, and there's no changin' em neither. But that there Cheyenne, Wyoming--that tribe of Indians got it made. Now we got a tribe back down here in South Carolina somewhere. And you know what they done? They tried to take that away from em. Now, folks, that ain't right. And another thing ain't right--I didn't think and I'll tell everyone I know--I'm too old to run from human bein's and I never was much bad to run. When something stirred up I was there. I don't think this is

right and I'll tell the Supreme Court judges that and look at em and laugh. They ain't no business in the Supreme Court judges as old as they are. They was in there so old that one axed the other what he said, talk about--. And boy, I'll tell you one thing. I'll take the hide off one of them faster than you could put it back on. Yes sir. And I didn't think and I still don't think that it was fair to take it away from the Indians and treat em worse than I'd treat my dog. Take it away from the Indians and give it to the Niggers. I just don't believe that and I'll tell em. Any of em. I'd tell the President just as quick as I'd tell you. And look at him and laugh.

I've been in a lot of little museums and been in big museums--Gatlinburg, Tennessee, it's got the prettiest little museum I've ever been in. I've been to that one in Washington, and different places. But I was in one in Montana--that one there at Virginia City--I've been in that one there. I don't know. There's a sign used to be in West Virginia, "Stop, Look, and Listen, You May Meet Another Fool." That was on the signpost. "Stop, Look, and Listen, You May Meet Another Fool." And so that's about it.

Old Man Miller down on Elk would come as nigh of goin' back further than I would because he's a lot older man. I think he's a-climbin' 89 now, and his membrance and his head is just as level as it ever was. Yes sir. Just as level as it ever was. And done enough hard work to kill a

man and a mule. The toughest thing that's left here on earth. And one of them little old burros--it wouldn't hurry fer the world if its ass was on fire. Wouldn't do it.

You can't no more--the time's come, young feller, that you can't trust nobody, huh uh. You can't trust nobody. I tell the folks a lot of times around here that you don't know from one day to the next what's a-comin'. Now, back on back behind us here--me and the Old Lady used to--the Old Hen--we used to never lock our doors. Never thought about lockin' our doors, but people's got so mean they'll do anything. They'll do anything. You take somebody like that now. They realize and know we're gettin' old, but if I got a-hold of my gun, I'll tell you one thing, he'd go. And I wouldn't put him in the hospital to torment his people neither. I'd put him over on the other side of the fence. People's got so mean--I heared something over the news that bothered me a little. A little young-un got--got out to a electric stove and burnt it to death. I noticed it out of the news--I believe it was this morning or last night. Mothers ain't like they used to be, huh uh. Back when our little-uns was all at the house--we got one in the house now with cancer, bad. She won't last long, I think--the very best that can be done--she won't last long. But now when bedtime come, when mine was little, mother always looked around and seed about em, that they was covered up. Now she done that many a time. We used to

live right out there in a little old shack that the young-uns could feed the chickens through the cracks in the floor. And they ain't nary a one of em froze to death yet. No sir. Just as happy as we could be. And, but you never know any more what's gonna happen. [Willard looks around for his dog as a car goes by outside.] Son, now where you at? Somebody stopped, I think. But now you never know, any more. Now you can take this. You can go to ninety percent of the homes in Watauga County today, and ax the mother where the daughter's at and she don't know. You take--turn it right around on the other side of the fence. Go to the homes, ax the mother--ax the daughter where the mother's at and she don't know. That's it now. Bad. And back in them days they knowed where they was at. Yes sir. Well, I don't know. We just have to stand, look, and listen and see what's gonna happen next.

David: You know the family as a unit is not as strong as it used to be.

Willard: No no. No sir. You take young folks go out here and get married and six months--six months is a long time fer em to stay together. And now that ain't right. I bet I know what they're a-doin' before they do that.

We went out to a--Sunday--to Arnold's out here--him and hisn. They slipped it on em, the young-uns. They didn't know nothin' about it. And they was married fifty years Sunday. And the young-uns all fixed it up and slipped it on em. They come and invited me and the Old

Lady. We went out and stayed awhile with em. They had the prettiest cake you ever seed. And another thing--they had on some kind of a little thing--it was pretty--they had a fifty-dollar bill. And I told Arnold yesterday I'd like to have that fifty-dollar bill. If I had that fifty-dollar bill I'd keep it fer another year and show it to him. But now, boy, they're havin' a time with Aunt Nannie there. What a time they're havin'.

David: Now you've been married more than fifty years, haven't you?

Willard: Me? Me and the Old Lady was tied together fifty-eight years the fifth day of this comin' October gone by. Hit don't seem long. I pick at her at lot of times. But now they don't come no better mother as they is in the house now. I pick at her--I call her an old sow. I call her anything that comes to my head. They's one thing, though, she don't like. She says, "I want you to quit that." She never said a ill word about it. I told her I married a half Indian and a half bear, and what time she wasn't on the warpath she was sittin' in the corner growlin'. And now she don't like that. No sir. The daughter, she's in bad shape--won't be no better. No, she'll never be no better. And so we'll just have to do the best we can with her. I told her they's one thing I said we'll not let you--and she won't eat nothin' atall. When you don't eat you don't live very long. I got sick two years ago I reckon. Man, I got sick too. I had low

blood and I believe an ulcer. She liked to put me over the hill. So I don't know. But now my body is in pretty good shape, but my feet and legs givin' me a lot of trouble. Burns just like fire. Now my feet feel just like they's just as hot. But at night I can go to bed, stick em in bed and they just burn up, and job em out from under the covers and cool em off. And I don't know where--it's poor circulation I think. I went to a doctor and I think that--he gave me some pills as big as a rabbit's hind foot. Great big old long capsules. And, but I don't know. I tell em old age will slow you down. Yes sir. I used to didn't--.

Ten years ago or less time than that we used to deer hunt a lot together. And I told the boys, I said when the boys got to the top of the mountain I was a-standin' there with em. But I said, "Now, boys, you'd have to wait fer me. Get up and go to the top and wait fer me." I ain't goin' to hunt no more that I know of now. I like to squirrel hunt awful good, but I've got too fer along. Can't get around. And used to go to the mountains and hunt a lot of sling shot forks. I've caused more little boys to get their tail ends whupped than any man in the country. And buy a sling shot--I wouldn't buy my young-un a sling shot and then whup it over it. No sir. If he tore the house down with it, if I bought it fer him, that'd be it. I wouldn't whup him over it atall. But, still yet. Young-uns don't--they're not made to mind like they used to

be. I've heared little eight, nine, and ten years old turn around and tell its mother it didn't have to. Look out now, if it had been mine. I've never heared nary one of mine give my--the Old Hen in the house--never heared em give an ill word. They knowed that wasn't right. That wouldn't work. One of em's to sass its mother I'd slap it right now--wouldn't hunt no place to slap it--I'd slap it right now. And they know it to. When I told one to do anything it had it to do.

[Willard turns around to stoke the fire and his dog is lying right in the way.] Son, you're just never goin' to stop. You just lay around here right in the way. He's gonna be where I'm at. Now he can't stand thunder and lightning, huh uh, and a gun? No, he can't stand a gun atall. When it thunders he come a-crawlin under that bench--gets just as close to me as he can get. When it was cool--there's two good beds upstairs--I've got one of em there--I'd go up there a lot of times and lay down and rest. He got crippled up--it bothered him yet, too. Yes, it bothered him yet. Somebody hit him with a car, but he got over it. But he ain't over it nor never will be.

One day I was gone somewhere or another. Old Lady said he just paced everywhere--went over and over and never did stop--huntin' fer me. And he come in the house and went right upstairs huntin' fer me. He's gettin'--he's fadin' some too. He's about--goin' on six years old. He'll be here, oh, when he passes on, I'm a-livin'. And

every time we eat he eats.

But, still yet. They's not any--they ain't but one road's ain't got any end. They ain't but one road that ain't got any end. And that's a cane mill road. Goes round and round--you just step in and out--ain't got no end.

David: You used to walk that one barefooted?

Willard: Yeah. Many and many--followed a yoke of cattle many a hour, grindin' cane. Well, I don't know what.

David: What did you use the molasses for?

Willard: To eat. The best sweetnin' you ever eat. I'd rather have molasses than honey and any sweetner that's made. Yeah, they made a lot. I brought some from Raleigh. They make em down there every year. Been a-makin' ever since I was there, and I was there twenty-one years this last year. But I don't know whether I'm a-gonna be able to go back or not. [Bozo comes up for attention.] Well, all right. [Willard pats him on the head. Bozo lifts his paw.] All right, then, stick it up here, then. [After his paw has been shaken, Bozo lies back down.] If I give him time now when I come out of the house, he'll put both front feet right around my neck. I'll say, "Gimme some sugar." He'll stick his nose there. But now let me tell you something. Him, and my granddaughter's got one up here, a little white pied--a black and white pied--now the other dogs'll let them two alone. Yes sir. One jumps on one of these, the other one'll go on to him. And he'll tear him

down too. If he don't--if you don't get there they'll kill. Now, they's a little black one here, and them two dogs, now--Snookey and Bozo--that's her name. My granddaughter's dog's named Snookey. Snookey can come down here and mine'll be eatin'--he'll just step back and give him something to eat too. And dogs--hundreds of dogs wouldn't have that atall. And I got a little old black one runnin' around--a little feist--and he's just as good to that as he can be. And he can be eatin' too. He'll give it something to eat, won't you? Now lay down and rest awhile. You're a mess--you're just as mean as you can be. A dog's a good friend too. He'd follow me till he fell dead.

[Willard gets up and goes over to his work table.] My feet and legs been givin' me a lot of trouble. I have to put up with it--they's no way out of it.

David: What are you making there?

Willard: Sled. A little sled. Yeah, I'm just about run out of everything. Woman come here from New York the other day and bought everything--she did just about buy everything I had.

David: Did you know she was coming?

Willard: Yeah. She called me. She called me. She was in Hickory. She called me in Hickory and said she'd be here about five-thirty. Five-thirty come and she was here. But she said she hit some rough goin' comin'. Somewhere or another she said her car turned around in the road with her

three times. I said, "If you'd got scared right then you'd have got killed. You held a good nerve." She said, "Yep," said, "I had to." But she come on. She bought--I believe it--she bought eighty-five dollars worth, and took it. Bought what I had.

David: How many of those do you make at one time?

Willard: Sometimes maybe four or five or six. Make em and get tired of em. Now I ain't made none of these--I've got to have some. I ain't made none of em in a right smart bit. I have to have some. [Willard looks around for a small piece for one of the sleds.] Well, I thought I made enough to have enough to go in that one, but I don't know. Takes six.

David: Here it is.

Willard: Yeah. Now some of these days, when you take the notion, you come down, and me and you--we'll go down to the Old Man William's. I always liked him. I worked many and many a days, boys, with that man. Sawmill all his life. He got retired. Millions and millions of feet of lumber. He's a sawyer.

David: Was he out in the woods cutting it or was he in the mill?

Willard: He's at the mill--he done both ways. Yes sir. He cut it in the woods. He didn't then. He used to cut timber too. I've cut many a log with him, boy. Yes sir. I sure have. I've studied about it a lot of times--where all I've worked, and go back and cut timber. Boy, we cut a

boundary down here under the mountain--called it the Coon Den Branch, and boy it was rough. Yes sir, it sure was rough.

David: Did you work any with Arnold in the woods?

Willard: Oh, me and Arnold have pulled a cross-cut saw many a day. Yes sir. Yes sir! Arnold's good. And another thing. He can run a power saw. He can run a power saw and another thing, he could file one--beat any man a-filin' a power saw--better than any man I ever saw. And Old Sammy fell many a--fell millions of feet.

One time me and him and Steve--that's a cousin of mine, he's done paid the price, he's done gone--we was a-fallin' timber down here under the mountain. They's a place down there they call the Coon Den Branch.

[Bozo gets up and goes to the door.] He's heared something. [A car passes and the driver toots the horn.] I guess that the boy that's goin' back to Ohio. Called it Coon Den Branch. My man, it was rough. Good timber, though. And we was together that day--cuttin' together. He holp us a lot. And they was a big forest poplar a-standin' there. I mean a big one. And right there was three scared men. The land was smooth and the tree was a-standin' there just as straight as any tree you ever seed. The boys got a cut in the back of that about that deep, and we'll never know, never know nor nothin' what happened. They come a slab off--busted a slab off just like a gunfire--exactly. And if I had been a-standin'

right behind it, it'd a-drove me into the ground. And it skinned a big black gum, and that tree never done another thing. We never did know, and we don't know yet, what caused that to do that.

And I'll tell you another thing I saw durin' the time of my life. Mother's love never dies. It was on the same job--no--yeah, it was too. It was on the same job. We fell a big forest pine about four foot through right down the mountain. It didn't leave nothin'. It was big enough--big, tough--and everything went with it when it went down. And we was--I went down to measure the first cut off of it, and I looked, comin' up that tree there come a flyin' squirrel. I said to Steve I said, "Well--" His nickname was Gaz, and Sammy, we called him Sammy, Arnold--his nickname was Sammy, and mine was Henry. And I said, "Gaz," I said, "wait a minute here." I said, "Let's see something here a minute, that we'll learn here." That come right on up the log. We just set down and stopped. Went right off into the--right off the log. Went to huntin'. And she found em. She had three, just about the size of a chestnut. Well, right over from us was a big holler sourwood, had a hole down in it. And she took one of em--she took one of em back and got the others that was alive and come back and took it right up and put it down in that big sourwood. And she come back to the one that was killed and she took her nose and rooted it over and over and over. And when she found it was gone, she went right

back down in that old sourwood with the other two. That's mother's love. They's just one love that'll beat that one. And that's it now. Just one more love will beat mother's love.

But people's changed a lot. People's ain't a bit like they used to be than day and night. Used to be now a bad--bad day come or something, the old timers, they'd walk and go see each other and set down and talk fer hours at a time. I told em I had the best neighbors of anybody in the country--never come about 'less they wanted something. I can 'member when they'd go--my granddad--my grandmother had a sister lived over here, and I've got a clock in the house that they went and bought that clock. I know where it come from. And they went and bought one, and Uncle John, they went and bought one. And Uncle Al Watson--now that was one of the Old Tom's set down here. He was the oldest, him and Sid was the two oldest ones of that generation--Sid and Al, Avery, and Uncle George and my granddad. I think that's--four or five other boys.

David: What was your granddad's first name?

Willard: My granddad?

David: Yeah. What was his first name?

Willard: What was his first name? Smith.

David: Smith Watson?

Willard: Smith Watson. Now up this old road over here--the road used to go up over there. My water comes from there now. Grandpaw and Smith Church--they's a feller

lived around on the mountain and his name was Smith Church, and my grandpaw was named Smith Watson. And they was buildin' this road out here, and they cleaned that spring out durin' the time of it. And they called it the Smith Spring. It's went by that just as fer as I can 'member back. It's all I ever 'member--they call it the Smith Spring. And my water comes from there to the house, and it's just as good a water as comes from under the soil. Never gets weak neither. I was up there some time ago--cleaned it out, put a new cover over it, and they's a inch-and-a-half overflow pipe runnin' from it full yet. All through that dry weather it never faded a bit. And we had one up over yander and one out yander that hit went dry--bone dry. That one over here went dry, and one around yander went dry, but this'n of mine--. They's one on up yander, just--you 'member that wet place in the road up here?

David: Yes.

Willard: Right under--right over from that, under that big oak, they runs a spring out of there that'll fill a two-inch pipe. But now that's good water. I tell you it is. So I don't know. They's one thing about the Blue Ridge hills of North Carolina--we have got good water. We sure have. And I've drunk her in several different states. The sorriest water I've ever drunk in my life was in Florida. Florida and West Virginia holds the worst water I've ever drunk. Now that sulfur water in West Virginia--

David: It's not good, is it?

Willard: No sir. I don't know why, but--and Florida holds bad water and Montana held good water. Back in the hills of Montana there the water was just as good. All the way--never--it was cold all the time. I could--we stayed in an old hotel by the name of Grant Hotel. And if you thought about it, you could look up any time you wanted to on the head of Bear Canyon Creek. They's a creek there they call Bear Canyon, and you could see the snow the year around. Old Man Reedy Willers said he had been there thirty-five years and that snow was there when he went there. And oh that water--I fished that stream. That's the last trout fishin' I went. I went to Bear Canyon Creek. Just go there and catch all you want. Turn right around and go back the next day and do the same thing. It never got short up there. And the bigger the stream the bigger the fish; the smaller the stream--now pan-sized is what I like. They're the best fish. Now everybody likes to catch a big un, but they ain't no count.

David: You want to catch the ones that are good to eat.

Willard: Yeah. Yeah, I do. Boys, I caught many a one while I was there.

David: How long were you in Montana?

Willard: I stayed a little over five months there. I felled timber there. That's what I went there fer. I never seed a drop of rain fall while I was there. I seed one hail storm and it was not too big of hail. We was up

in what they call--ever place is named there--the first boundary of timber we cut was in Robert's Gorge. That was the name of the place. And the next one we went to was--they called it Big Hollar. That was the name of the place. We looked--they was a place there they called Silver Mine Mountain. And we looked--comin' across it looked just like fog a-rollin'--comin' right toward us. And we knowed we was a-gonna get drowned. We thought we was. And we went and peeled us some bark and set em up on each side of a log that way and got under em. And when it quit there, hail was about that deep [holds his fingers about three inches apart], but it's not too big. But the whole mountains and everything was just as white with hail. And I seed a--they called it a sandstorm. And we run in and said--they told us if you--in a sandstorm, just set down and turn your back to it, said it won't last long and it'll move on. It was about--it looked to be about a mile wide. And we just set down with our backs up agin a tree and set there till she went by. But now everything there and the finest people you ever seed in your life is right there in Montana.

David: What kind of timber did you cut?

Willard: We was fallin' Douglas Fir. Douglas Fir. Oh man alive! But if I was back young and could take it, Oregon or Montana would be my choice state. I'd ride into one of them big lumber camps in Oregon and hang my cap. Boys, I've come to stay.

We left out of Arcata, California, on the Redwood Highway, and boy we looked at some forest timber there. Oh, my my, I've seed the time--well, a man would just have killed hisself there. Cut one down and turn around and job at another one. Just as thick as they could stand on the ground. And not a bit of undergrowth under em--only maybe a limb had fell out. We stopped and looked at that--it laid off down that way. Prettiest country you ever seed. But I can't help but want to go back. I can't help but think about it and want to go back. Huh uh, it's done gone now.

David: You're going to stay here?

Willard: Yep, I'm gonna finish it up here--right in the Blue Ridge hills. Finish it up now.

But they's one thing I may have to do this now--I don't want to--just go into the house and hump up. I can't stand that atall. And I told some of em the other day, I said, "Well," I said, "I don't want to go to a rest home." I said, "I may have to." I ain't gonna stay by myself as long as they's somebody here to stay with. Huh uh. I ain't gonna do it. So, I don't know. So many--now it's pitiful to have to go to a rest home--leave home. They was an old man over here on Elk. They took him to a rest home, and he just begged em and cried, "I wanna go home." I wouldn't put up with much of that. They coulda took care of him, and they woulda done it too, but a lot of em won't do that.

But a lot of em will get what Dad and Mother's got and then pitch em in a rest home. Yes sir. That won't work. But the young folks anymore, they don't care.

David: They just want the money, huh?

Willard: Just the money. Well, me and the Old Hen's got our business fixed up, I reckon. That'll stand the test when the final day comes. I want all of mine to share alike. We went and had ours made, the business fixed up. I've got one and she's got one. If I goes first she can hold it till she goes. And when she goes they won't be a-quarrelin' and a-fightin'. They won't be a-fightin' if I can help it. If I goes first, why she controls it. When she goes it's equally divided. They'll be no quarrelin' and fightin' over it, or scratchin'. But a lot of folks makes mistakes. While you're livin' go on and fix your business up like you want. Yeah, they's a bunch of young-uns quarrelin' and fightin' over the mother--over the dead mother's business, and I don't like that. No good.

[While I changed tapes I asked Willard about his process of curing a ham. He began by telling me about getting a suitable hog from one of his neighbors.]

I went back and seed him before we went and got--I said--they's about twelve or fifteen in that place, and when I went and seed him he said, "Well now Willard," he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do." He said, "I keep about

twelve or fifteen hogs," he said, "for my neighbors." And he said--he said, "They's just like you," said, "they don't want these small hogs." And I said, "I don't, now." I said--I told him why and he said, "You're right." He said, "If you're goin' bakin' it down and cure it for home use," he said, "the bigger the better." And it is. And, waited right on up, and I axed him about what he thought that the price of em would be when we come to get em. And he said, "Willard, they'll run around a hundred and seventy-five apiece." And a feller give us such a dirty deal down here last year, we never would fool with him no more. We bought hogs off of him for over ten years. He give us a dirty deal last year and we quit. Now, you take home-use hogs needs to be big hogs. They's good ones, these was. And when we went back to get em, he--this feller went up on us last year. We paid two hundred--two hundred and twenty-five dollars for em last year. But they was good. And they weighed over four hundred. And we told him just what we told this feller. Said, "If the weather's right, we'll be after em around Thanksgiving." And it was later. It was just too hot, and we didn't get to get em till way on up--kept em another week or two fer us. He just went up on us so bad we just quit foolin' with him. And he called somebody and told em that they had some big hogs now if they wanted some. If a man--if a man was to treat me halfway decent I'll do the same to him. And we had been buying off of--Hill Carter was the man's name. We'd been

buying off of Hill fer years--he just give us a dirty deal. We just quit. And I told this feller over here, "Now we don't care to pay your price if you raise what we want."

That was it. Boy, he's got some hogs, though.

David: What do you do from the time you hang that hog up there till you get it ready to eat?

Willard: We gut it first. Take its insides out. Lay him down on that bank down there and cut him up. And go from there to the salt. I like to salt my meat. I've never lost--me and the Old Lady has been together fifty-eight years the fifth day of this last October gone by, and we've had a hog every year so fer. And I like to salt my meat while the animal heat's in em, and that there--while it's warm that salt'll draw all that blood, every bit of it out. And I hung mine up the other day. I've done hung mine up. And long about the last of March now--huh uh, the last of February--now, I cure mine in the old-timey style just like my granddad taught me all of his life. He cured hisn all just as fer back as I can 'member that way. I'll let that meat hang there now to about the last of the next month. I don't like the March wind to blow on it. It yellows it. I'll take that down.

David: Now where do you have it hanging?

Willard: Out here in my meat house. Hang it up with string, let em hang there. I hung mine and Sid's both up out there the other day. I'll let that hang there now till about the last of February. I'll go get that then. I've

got a twelve-gallon wash pot out there--big old pot, too. I'll build me a fire under that and fill it full of water. I'll heat that water and get it just boilin'. And I'll take that meat down then, take it out there. I go to town--I generally get two pounds--I generally get two pounds of black pepper, and one little box of red pepper or two. One little box of red pepper or two little boxes. I'll mix that together. Then I'll take some boric and mix it all together, and take brown paper and I'll take that meat out of there--out of that hot water, and we wipe that meat then, dry it. And then we put--we spread out this brown paper and we put black pepper, red pepper, and boric just covered like that. And wrop it up and I got tape--always tape that air tight. Hang it up and let it hang there--I sliced a big shoulder the other day--and bring it out of there and long about July and August they begin to get ripe then. And when you take one of them down there it'll be the awfulest looking thing you ever seed in your life. It'll be molded--just to look at it you wouldn't think a dog would eat it. But you've got to take that mold off of em. If you don't take that mold off of it, it'll ruin you. If you slice one of em and get ary bit of that mold on the meat it'll ruin you. That's the way I handled mine. I've handled it--I've lost three pieces in fifty-eight years. I've always cured my own meat. And when we have a homecomin' down here at the church every year and I always cure a ham--take it down, slice it, fry

it, fix it up and take it down. I scarcely eat a bit of lean meat, but I give the fat trouble. Yes sir. Got a whole lot better taste. It has now. And I always furnish one fer the church down here. Have fer the last several years--I don't know how fer back. Now if you want something to eat you just get down there. And I'll tell you when it is. It's the third Sunday in September. Been there every year, has been. Used to have it up in October, but it got so cold we left it. And we got a place built fer it too. It rains you'll be in the dry. Two sets of tables about a hundred and fifty feet long. And I'll tell you one thing--you'll find something to eat there.

David: One hog lasts you a whole year?

Willard: Well, no. We use a lot of--we use a lot of homemade--now a woman can't fix nothin' to eat unless she got something to fix it with. No, she can't fix nothin' to eat. Go to the meat market and buy a mess of--Shit!--it ain't fit to eat. Huh uh. Now I can raise something--I can keep something that you can eat. And that side meat--I think we just about run out of side meat from last year. You can cook soup beans with em. We just about use all we had--I think we got a small little piece left from last year. [End of Tape]

APPENDIX E
Narrative Four

NARRATIVE FOUR

I recorded the following conversation March 10, 1984, in Willard Watson's workshop. His niece, Nancy Watson, was also with us. I told Willard that I wanted to know more about his youth.

Willard: When I left home and went to Shull's Mill to work--that was the White Lumber Company--I left home when I was fourteen years old. And when I got to the camp, he was there. Walter Eller was there and a lot of other boys I knowed then. Well, that holped along, you know--just knowed somebody that was there. When we got there they was a lot of old timers there that I knowed. Old Man John Hendricks from down here on Stony Fork, Old Man Wash Hodgekin from Elk, and Leonard Carroll. We used--me and Leonard Carroll rolled a wheel barrow from one--uh, one outfit, every day it was fittin'. We rolled one nine months flat. They didn't have no rubber tired uns like they got now. They's steel. We rolled one for nine months straight every day it was fittin'. Now, they was a feller there by the name of Ken Hodge--Ben Shell and Bob, they was there. And they was there when we got there. And they was a feller by the name of Ken Hodge from Elk over here. He

was there.

Well, come bedtime I stood around just like a lost chicken from its mother. They was a peg-legged man there by the name of Ab Moss. Worked in the woods all the time too. When it come bedtime, he said, "Watson," said, "you can bed a me." He said, "And there won't nobody bother you neither." Said, "I keep my snake gun with me all the time." Slept with a 32-20 under his arm all the time. Now Old Ab didn't care, now. Was one of them kind that didn't care.

I started there. And went out next morning--I 'member the feller's name--the foreman was named Doc Harvey. And they was a feller, the mountain foreman was John Phillipe. That was the two men. John Phillipe was the wood foreman and Doc Harvey was the--he handled the buildin' of the tram roads, you know, the railroad. Went out that morning and asked him fer a job, and he looked at me. He said, "You a little slim and light." He said, "What can you do?" I said, "I'll try anything you got." He said, "Come on," Said, "I've got you a job now." Well, we went on, and he put me with that steel gang you called it, layin' track. And he said, "Your job is to keep all the tools where the men can get em. And the railroad spikes, he said, "Now," he said, "put four to a tie." And where it's coupled together they called em angle irons, and he said, "Put four angle irons, put two to each side, and four bolts.," he said. To bolt em together. So I did. I got along just

fine with him.

But now we was workin' in the sawmill camp one time. Me and Doc's [Doc Watson, Willard's cousin] daddy, Uncle Gen'l, was there in that camp. We was in a place called Joe's Fork over here. They left us there to finish up the job. We lacked about one day of bein' done cuttin' timber. Me and Uncle Gen'l. Levi over here was a-fallin' timber. And they left us to finish it up. Left the kitchen down plenty to eat. It was cold, plumb cold. Now the best I 'member, they was a little snow--a skift of snow on the ground. We went up to the camp after we went in, went down and got supper, eat supper. Now, built us a good fire. We had plenty of wood fixed. We just went to bed, just as happy as we could be. Got up the next morning, a big snow on the ground. Us back in the mountains. Back in the hills. Uncle Gen'l, it worried him awful. And me and Levi, we was just as happy as we could be. They was a way you come out of there, come down across Laurel and Elk and they called it the Dugger. We come out--oh, he was gonna walk out, you know. And I said to him, I said, "Uncle Gen'l, you can't never make that that fer as deep as the snow is." Big snow on the ground. He eventually quietened down. After--long about twelve o'clock or some time after we heared something a-comin'. When they come, it was John Hampton out here, brought a jeep and come in after us. That was the last time I was ever back in there. I never went back no more. Boy, they had a good--plenty to eat.

Evie Triplett, Eugene Triplett's wife, she done the cookin' fer us, had the whole gang. Them good days is gone.

David: You say you were fourteen when you left home?

Willard: Fourteen years old when I left home. And I've done very well, I reckon, I made from then till now. And I've never been put in jail yet. Course now, I wouldn't doubt if I ain't done some things that would have--they'd a-penned me if they'd a-knowed it.

David: They just never caught you, huh?

Willard: Catchin's always before hangin'.

David: Do you know the story of Tom Dooley?

Willard: Used to did.

David: I've heard several different versions of that.

Willard: Well, I'll tell you who had the--Doc knows it out here close. Yeah, he does. And they was an old man by the name of Frank--[Long pause.]--my thinker ain't as good as it used to be. Frank Proffitt. He's the man that wrote the--he's the man that had the closest to it, Tom Dooley, of anybody I've knowed of.

David: Was Tom Dooley innocent or did he kill Laura Foster?

Willard: Tom was innocent himself. He didn't kill this woman. That woman was with him killed her. Ann Melton killed her, killed Laurie Foster. I've been to the place where it happened at. That was it, now, and he--he just give his life to save hers.

David: Why did she kill Laurie?

Willard: Just, you know, just how old jealousy will be. They said--I never could seed him--but they said Tom Dooley was a good-looking man. He sure was. I heared my granddad and grandmother--no, huh uh--Aunt Beck and some of em--they hung him at Hickory. They went from here to there, down there to see Tom Dooley hung. But now, that there--they said Ann Melton, though, was a pretty--a good-looking woman. They said when they come to court, they said she's a-dolled up, had ribbons a-hangin' from all over.

David: She wanted to be as pretty as she could for the court.

Willard: Yeah. No sir. Now, that weren't right. Now I've got as good a woman in the house as a man ever kept around him. And I loved her and I love her yet, too. But I don't believe I loved good enough to give my life away fer her. Huh uh.

David: Sheriff Grayson, was he in on it?

Willard: He just 'rested him.

David: He wasn't in with Ann Melton or anything like that?

Willard: Didn't have nothin' to do, just 'rested him. He said--I used to know all of it. "If it hadn't been fer Sheriff Grayson--." He started fer Tennessee, you know. And they caught him on the way. Sheriff Grayson caught him on his way. He said, "This night and one more where I'll be." And he played the fiddle. He was a good fiddle player. So, don't like that.

Somebody called me some time ago from Raleigh and axed me if I thought that the recipe of moonshine whiskey would die out. I said, "No sir, Cap'n." I said, "It will not die out." I said, "Some old farmer in Wilkes County will set up and make him a little to drink as long as time goes on." And he will. And something fer his friends and things like that. They's an old man still yet down in that country down--this is in Caldwell County. They's an old feller down there--he runs twice a year--he runs ten bushels of corn twice a year. But now you couldn't get a-hold of that unless he seed the snake a-crawlin' that beat you.

David: I heard you tell once before, but I don't remember all the details, about an experience you had with moonshine. And you really got more than you wanted to handle.

Willard: Yeah, I did. That broke me. That fixed me up. One cold, rainy day--he's gone now, he's done paid the price--we went to Boone up here. Helen, that's the oldest daughter, she wanted to go with me and get her a pair of shoes. And Guy Carlton over here and Calvin Watson's wife, Laurie, she went with us, on a little Model A pickup. A little Model A pickup. Well, we went on up there. It was an old, cold--it was in the winter time, an old, cold, drizzly--plumb cold. We lived right down there in a little shack, just as happy as we could be. We went on up there, and I run up with my uncle. He said, "Whew!" Said, "We

need something to warm up our blood." I said, "Let's go get us a drink." We went down there. That time you could get some good moonshine whiskey. Otis Watson sold it all his life, and I reckon sells it yet. We went on down there, and if we'd a-quit at that it'd a-measured out all right, but we didn't. We just got us a pint, and us three just naturally drunk it. Well, that'd been all right. That wouldn't a-bothered us. Enough to warmed us up good. Well, it got to tastin' pretty good. We just got us another pint, took it on with us. Got up to town there. Right on the corner they was a little old beer joint. We went in that little old beer joint, and when we got in there we run up with Clayton Hayes from Blowing Rock. Man, we just about tried to drink it all. I come out of there--the policeman's badge--I 'member Old Man Wally Day was the policeman in Boone town then, and his badge looked as big as a dinner plate. I just looked awful. I started across the street, got up to--Helen, she was over in Old Smitty's store with this neighbor woman. I wallered around there like an old rooster, straightened up, and started across the street. I went in--I knowed when I went where it was warm--I knowed if I stayed in there long it'd make me sick. And Helen said, "Daddy," said, "don't get drunk." I said, "Oh hell, sister," I said, "I'm done drunk." Come on home, walked from out here where you all turned in. Walked from there, come on down here to the little shack. The Old Hen in the house said to me, said, "You had a few

snorts, ain't you?" I said, "Yeah, and plenty of em." Never give her a ill word. And she said, "I'd be ashamed," she said, "a-raisin' a gang of young-uns here and out gettin' drunk." I said to her, I said, "I've done quit." She said, "Prove it to me." And she come back at me, she said, "Prove it to me." Seventeen years from that time I took another drink. If I want it, I've took a drink all my life. But she always knowed that I never would get drunk. And that fixed me.

Now this is back, on back. We was a-saw-millin' down under the mountain here fer William Miller. And we didn't go get us a jar, we just went and got us a five-gallon can. You could get it in a five-gallon can. We come on down there. Oh, we just drunk it till we got tired of it. Uncle Phineas, right down here on the--just a short distance down here--he made a sixty-gallon barrel full of blackberry wine. That would do. Well, I got me up a--come on up--I met somebody, and he axed me where I was a-goin'. I told him I was goin' to Wildcat to get me some wine. And I come on down to my uncle's, and I didn't have nothin' to put it in. Got me a peck bucket, tied me a cloth over it, headed back to where I was a-stayin' at. Set that up on the table. Ever one that passed got him about a half a glass of whiskey and about a half glass of wine. And I'm tellin' you what's the truth, that wine and whiskey mixed together, that'd fix you right there. We went to fallin' round there just like tender weeds would from a fire. I

said to the woman--her name was Omie, one of the best old humans you ever seed--I said, "Well, Omie," I said, "all the rest of em's gotten drunk." I said, "I might as well get drunk too." Well, I went by the table, and I slept upstairs, I stayed there then. I got me about a half a glass of whiskey and wine and turned it up and drank it. Started fer my bed. 'Gin I got to the top of the stairs my bed was--I caught it and got on it.

David: Was it going back and forth across the room?

Willard: It was goin' from me. I got on it. And Uncle Ben Triplett drove a Model A skeeter. He picked it up and drove it from Montana. Took him fourteen days and nights. He drove it up from there. Leonard Carroll bought it. And no road went through here then. Leonard Carroll bought it, and some of em was beginnin' to get sober enough to know where they was at--what they was a-doin'. They went after that thing. Just an old mountain road, but you could go about anywhere with a good Model A Ford. He built an outfit on it, and I was still drunk. Now that broke me again. They come upstairs and roused me up, and I had to go with em after that. Oh man, I was so drunk I couldn't--but I eventually went part of the way with em. I got as fer as I could go. And they raised me up. I crawled up on the bank of the road and laid down. After awhile--I had a new pair of overalls on--and we'd eat everything like a drunk would that could be eat. And it made me so sick--I was too sick--I was too nigh dead. I

was too sick to die. I crawled up on the bank and it made me so sick, oh, I just--they call it vomickin' now--I called it spewin'. My overalls' bib just fell out like that. I just spewed the awfulest mess. Nancy, you talk about bein' in a mess now, I was in the worse mess any white man could a-been in. Couldn't a-got no worse mess 'less they'd a-throwed him in an outside toilet and a-drug him out. And stunk? Laws! Well, when I come to myself and got over that, I said, "Well, if I can't do no better than that, I'll just let her alone." Never would take enough from that day on to get drunk. But now that fixed me.

Three years ago this last May I was in Charlotte at a convention. We always went there, me and Frank Hodge up here. And I'd stood around there and got tired and I thought of a can of beer. I just walked around there. I never--if I drunk beer I always drunk Schlitz. I got me a can of Schlitz and drunk it, throwed it in the waste basket, and it's done me from then till now. Never touched another one.

But some time back, on back down the road, I don't know what it was, but some part of my body craved that. Every time I turned around I thought of a drink of likker. Somebody passed--I don't know who it was, I don't 'member now who it was--and give me a fifth of Kentucky bourbon with about that much gone out of it. That's supposed to be the best whiskey that's made, but I ain't found none of

that government likker--ain't none of it yet--no good. Well, I woke up in the night and would think of a drink of likker. Now, one day the Old Lady--she went to Maggie's, to her sister's at Granite Falls. And I was in the old shop then. And I thought of it again, thought of a drink of whiskey. I just come out of there and I went to the house. And I went to huntin', and I hunted that place over. Hunted the cabinets, hunted everywhere I thought--I knowed she put it away but I hadn't found it yet. Went in to the--happened to think of the stairway. I went to the stairway, and there it sat. Just like she set it there. You know what I done? I stooped down and uncapped that, took two small little drinks out of it, and set it back, and it ain't bothered me from then till now. There was some part of my body that craved that, and when I drunk it, it fixed it.

Had a feller that lived over in Tennessee, and you know, he come over here, and his brother, the older brother of him was named Greene, Greene Watson. And they wanted us to come to Big Creek, Tennessee, to make likker. Well, you know, me bein' a boy, that just suited me, I didn't care. Well, and they was a feller over there by the name of Jerry Triplett--made it as long as he lived and able to get to the woods to do it. He bought a cow and wanted us to bring that cow from here--drive that cow from here to Big Creek, Tennessee. Well, I was a boy, you know, I didn't care. Well, we started. We stayed all night down on New River,

over here the first night. We stayed all night with an old man by the name of Will Watson at the Bart Brown place. And, we stayed all night there.

Got up next morning. And they's a place they call Long Hole that goes down into Tennessee. Well, we headed off next morning, went right across Long Hole. Took that cow and drove it. Down in the evening, long down after--in the evening--the Old Man Greene was an older man than me and the other feller, and he said, "Well," he said, "we better begin to look of a place to stay all night." I was gettin' pretty well tired too, you know. Cow, we drove her. And down in some time--down in the evening--we looked across. No roads then, just little dog paths. We looked across from the road. That was up this side of Shady Valley, Tennessee. It took us two days and a half--two nights and two days and a half to drive her. And we looked across from the road. Set a little small cabin, a little barn and everything. He said, "I'll go down and see," said, "if we can get a place to stay all night." He went down, and the old man just said, "Yes." Said, "Bring your cow on in." Said, "We'll feed your cow and milk her." The old lady got up right then, went in the house and went to fixin' something to eat. Fixed us something to eat. I 'member she had some--I don't know what else--she had plenty on the table, but she had some milk and bread, and I love milk and bread yet just as good as anything, better than anything I've ever eat. I use more milk and bread

than anything else. I got--I was sleepy, you know, young and lazy. They sat there and talked till plumb up in the--way up. Directly she said, "I guess these here other boys wants to go to bed." Well, sure enough, she went and fixed me and Fonzo--that was his name, called him Fonzo. Said, "You two boys," said, "can bed together." And said, "Let the old man," said, "sleep by hisself." That was the Old Man Greene. So we went to--went to bed, and as good a bed as I ever lay down on.

Next morning, come out of there early and the old man went to the barn, fed that cow, milked her. We started on then. And the next day we made it down into Shady Valley, Tennessee. Yeah, the next day we made it down into Shady Valley, Tennessee. Well, down in the evenin' again, and Fonzo said, "We can make it on home tomorrow." And we did. We stayed all night with some more folks. They was just as nice. But you can't do that no more, huh uh. We stayed all night.

Next day, got up next morning, headed on. And we got from Shady Valley, Tennessee, we went from there into Big Creek. That was the name of the place. And we went to Big Creek, and we got down to--Fonzo lived there--his wife and children was there. Just a-makin' likker fer a livin', what they done. We rested that day, rested the rest of that day.

Next morning, the next day we got up and went to the still and went to work. We had eighteen sixty-gallon

barrels and they didn't bring the sugar, they made the sugar there too. They didn't bring the sugar there in ten-pound pokes. Brought a wagon, a thousand pounds of sugar at the time. Malt and rye--they used rye--malt and rye. My job was to get wood. Prettiest place you ever seed. It was right down at the mouth of the big cove. Dead chestnut poles layin'--was just plenty of em, any amount you wanted. Of a mornin' when I'd get there--we never run none of a night. Of a mornin' when we'd get there, I had a good double-bitted ax and a cross-cut saw. And I'd just go get me--always from that size up--cut me down two or three and put the butt on my shoulder, bring em down to the place, saw em up. Had a--we had a shed over it. It was in the dry. We was there ninety days and the furnace of that still was never cold from the time we started. When we'd run out and break back--called it breakin' back--the fellers'd bring a wagon just as close as they could. And they put it in ten-gallon kegs and fives--five-gallon kegs and tens. They'd carry em and put em on the wagon. I 'member the feller's name well--Jim Booher and Fred Bolden was the man we's--the two men we's workin' fer. And you could a-fired a twenty-two rifle and it was in hearin' of three--ours and two more. And I decided I'd go over too. I went over one day and when I got to the big still, they was a man a-standin' right on top of it. She was a hundred and fifty gallon, solid copper from one end of it to the other. And they was

a-puttin' out some whiskey there. And they was an old man runnin' it--wouldn't do a thing but make pure corn liquor. I went to his outfit. Had the prettiest little outfit. Just about what I've got over here. I've got one over here now, holds about thirty-five gallons, between thirty-five and forty gallons. And he was just as happy as he could be.

David: He didn't worry about the government people coming in?

Willard: No. Well, I'll tell you, they had the law bought over there. That's what they done. But now so fer--I stayed there ninety days and had plenty to eat. They brought our dinner to us just the same--man had a big black pair of mules, 'bout eleven o'clock we'd see him a-comin'. Brought anything you wanted to eat, just whatever you wanted. But now them good old days is gone on. They give me two dollars a day and dinner to fix wood fer em. I thought that was big money then, and it was. One dollar was worth ten now. Yes sir. Now this young folks--these young generations of people--huh uh, ain't gonna take what I took. I pulled a cross-cut saw a many a day, dollar and a quarter a day. I tell folks if you get hurt bad enough you'll never forget it.

During the WPA days, they's a woman died out between Boone and Blowing Rock at a place out there they call Flat Top. Didn't have no bulldozers nor nothin' like that, nor end loaders. They come and got forty-two of us WPA

workers, took us out there on an old open truck. Just about as cold as it is today. We went on out there, tied into that and went to shovelin' snow. Down about sometime between two and three o'clock, we got to where they could get this woman--get in and get her. And I don't 'member to save my life what they took her out of there with. I don't member. We loaded on, got ready to leave, and they left five little children a-standin' on the steps. And exactly a year from the day her husband died she died, on exactly on the same day. One year from the day she died, he died--uh, she died. We took up a collection, donation, fer the little children, and they was forty-two of us, and forty--every one of em gave the little children a dollar, but one man and he didn't have nothin', and some of the boys in the outfit loaned him one. And I never did know, never did learn, whatever went with them children.

I got into another scrape one time too. Huh uh. I said then when I got out of that one, got out of that mess, that I'd be careful of tellin' somebody what I'd do. This feller lives over--sometime or 'nother this summer I want you to go into that country. Nancy, have you ever been over to Lonnie Carter's?

Nancy: We went over there not long ago.

Willard: I want you to go in that country, see how people live--see what people lives. And just as happy, ain't they, as they can be?

Nancy: Lord yes!

Willard: Just as happy as they can be.

David: Where is this place?

Willard: You go down here on Elk. Go across it back into Laurel, a big creek there they call Laurel. It goes on through Powderhorn Mountain and out down here on Elk. You know when we went down to the Old Man William's? It was on the way down about--let me think a minute--.

David: Beyond his place?

Willard: No, it's on below his place. It's about a mile--let me think a minute--it's about a mile from where he lives on to what they call the mouth of Laurel, that's where it comes out. Comes out of Laurel into Elk. Used to be just as full of trout as it could be. And they's a lot of trout in there yet. I seed a brown come out of there last year that was twenty-four inches. That's a nice one now. The Horn, that belongs to the Powderhorn Mountain. He's got it all tied up, but you know what people--they slip in. That used to be my fun, a-squirrel huntin' out of season. I used to rather do that than anything. I'm too fer gone to do that, but I used to rather do that. Oh, how we used to aggravate em, you know. Tommy Osborne--Walt Edmiston, used to be the game warden fer this county. And they made their brags that they was two fellers on the head of Stony Fork--that's here--that they was a-gonna catch. Now, you know a friend is worth a lot of money. We got a-hold of that. Well, we didn't pay that no mind. We just went on a-squirrel huntin' 'long we got ready.

David: They were talking about you?

Willard: Yeah. Talkin' about me and Levi that lives over here. Me and him got up that morning, left the house here about four o'clock, between three-thirty and four o'clock. And we never would cross the Parkway. We'd cross it but we never would come out at the same place. Reason is, they'd set a trap and catch us. But we'd always come out at a different place. Well, we went on that day. When daylight come we was way on out on the mountain. Some of it's on the Parkway, but we didn't pay that no mind. We just outrun the ranger. If he got after us we'd just outrun him. They was a pine--pine thicket there just as thick as it could grow, and they was a big pine scattered here and yander over that. And I come to one of them big pines. They ain't gonna catch me 'cause they ain't gonna know where I'm at. I just lit right up that pine. It was limby from the ground. I lit right up that pine, got up. I went out over the top of the rest of the small pines, listened at em. That's when I heared one of em say, "Here's their tracks but I don't know what went with him." And me a-standin' up there, listenin'.

David: You'd been in bad shape if they had looked up.

Willard: Yeah, but they couldn't see me. It was so thick, the little pines, the small pines, they was so thick they couldn't see me. I listened at em go plumb on out of here. And I slipped down right easy and just a-whistled like a partridge. Levi, he answered me. Now, we had I don't know

how many squirrels. I don't know how many we had. They never did catch us. Catchin' always comes before hangin'.

And, another time, another time me and him went over there. I'd a-laughed of they'd a-catched both of us. That's all there would a-been at it. I'd a-been laughin' when they got a-hold of us. He said, "Willard," he said, "you go across the road, now, and listen fer me." It was sorter on a curve, you know. Well, I lit right across the road and stepped behind some little pines, enough to hide my body good. And I couldn't hear nobody so I motioned fer him to come on. And, he come, and when he got right in the middle of the Parkway, his huntin' sack broke, poured eleven out right in the middle of the road. You talk about rakin' up squirrels now, and he's jimmy-jawed anyhow. Stuck his chin out at me and said, "Did you see all of that?" I'd a-laughed if they'd a-catched both of us right there.

David: That would have been all right, huh?

Willard: Yeah, couldn't helped it. Laughed if they'd a-catched both of us. But them good days is gone.

Goin' on back to how people lived and studied about it. Back when I come up a young-un I stayed out here on the mountain with my granddad and grandmother.

David: Where were you born?

Willard: Right on out on the mountain here about--about one mile from here. Have you been out to Arnold's?

David: Yeah.

Willard: Right down below there where that trailer sets. Right there is where I was hatched at. Yeah, my granddad and grandmother lived there. In a little house. But now them days is different than now, then. During the fall of the year after everything was took care of, the crops, the first thing they done was get their winter's wood. My granddad had a bunch of sheep a-runnin' around there. And my mother was always up fer some fun you know. And Aunt Isabel, she was the oldest one of the bunch. And they had a big apple tree there, and it had a big fork to it. And they had wood piled up to that fork, and the sheep run out around the house. And them sheep had been all over that wood pile. Mama said to Aunt Isabel, said, "Isabel," said, "let's put a sack over that sheep's head and see us some fun." All right, put that sack over that sheep's head, and oh, talk about something funny. Hit done every way in the world, and directly it started right up that wood pile. It'd been walkin', went all over that wood pile, and went right through the fork of that apple tree. And when it went off the fork of the apple tree on the other side it broke its neck. There we was, you know. My mother come to me and humped down, hugged me up and said, "Don't you tell Grandpaw that that sheep had a sack over its head." She said, "If it does he'll kill us all." Well, now, I didn't want no killin'. Well, Aunt Isabel got her an old lantern, and they was up in an old house field there, they's a little log cabin. My Uncle Irv and Aunt Tamer lived there.

My granddad and grandmother, they went up to spend the night with em. They got em up an old oil lantern and went after em, up there, and told em, and said--they called him Pap, always called him Pap--said, "Pap," said, "Pap, one of them sheep fell off the woodpile and broke its neck." He said, "By God, Irv," says, "we'll have some mutton." They come out--I can see them skinnin' that sheep just as plain as I can see your white sock there. They skinned him, they skinned him out. I never did tell that till after Grandpaw was planted out there, after he died. No sir. He never did know about that there sheep a-fallin' off that woodpile and gettin' killed. But, them good days is gone, children, and I don't--they's worse ahead. They's worse ahead fer the American people. And it's a-comin'. You might be young enough to see it, but this is a-gonna happen. They gonna have trouble between the Whites and the Blacks.

I don't think we've got any government any more. We've got a bunch of old hoodoos over there and them Supreme Court judges, they're so old, them Supreme Court judges is so old, one'll ax the other what he said. But now I'll tell you one thing, I'd love to step just down on the floor, and just fifteen minutes. I want you to know one thing, when the Supreme Court said, "Get that crazy thing out of here before he tells the truth. He's gonna tell the truth." Boy, they'd be a fight to hear me.

David: You'd tell them how it is?

Willard: Yeah, yes sir. I'd tell em how deep the mud was

they was a-wadin' in. They wouldn't drown me. One of em popped his bill in I'd bite him so quick he wouldn't know how he got bit.

But I'll tell you what I did do now. I got tangled up with a woman lawyer at Raleigh. Now I want to tell you one thing, me and her had it, now. Up one side and down the other. Boy, she was glib on tongue, now, I'm tellin' you. And I was too. When she got ready to leave, she said, "Mr. Watson," said, "I want to tell you," she said, "you're the first man, the first man that ever backed me into a corner." I said, "If I had you under the bed I'd drag you out and look at you." That liked to kill that woman. Boy, from then on, she's a tough one.

David: Did you part friends?

Willard: Oh yeah. Yeah, she's, boy oh boy, though. She's a tough one, though, and I was too. But I just come out ahead of her. When she left she left light.

Charles Kuralt, the TV man. He was eatin' dinner at my table. He said, "Willard," he said, "I want to tell you something." He said, "I've been all over the world." He said, "I've been everywhere a man could eat." So he looked across the table at me and said, "I want to tell you something." He said, "Willard, you can think the fastest of any man I've ever looked in the face of." Yes sir. He said, "You can think the quickest of any man." About that time the Old Lady, she come along. She had to put her bill in. She said, "Yes," said, "Charles," said, "when he gets

mad over something or other, he can say some of the hatefulest things." And I can, but I don't do that no more. I avoid gettin' made mad. Well, I just won't do it.

I got a dog killed here. I got a dog gone. Warmed me up. Yeah, it did. Well, what happened, I had a dog here called Rusty, and I loved him as good as any dog I ever saw. I didn't love him no better than that one, as I do that one. My friend over here had two big hounds. They'd a-killed him once before. They chewed Sid's dog to death up here in the yard, at his house. He couldn't get a-hold of his gun in time. I was around yander gettin' some hickory bark to bottom some chairs. And he was up above me, and they took after him. And he come, run right up to me, and they downed him, but I got em off of him before they chewed him to death. They went on and he got gone. They chewed him to death and I don't know where. And it just naturally made me so mad that I told Levi over here, I said, "Levi," I said, "your dogs just killed my dog." And I said, "I wouldn't a-sold him--money wouldn't buy him." I said, "Now, do something with him." I said, "Do something with them two dogs or," I said, "I'm gonna." I said, "I'll shoot both of em." And I said, "Now when I do, Levi, don't just misunderstand me," I said, "I won't run, I'll be there." And you know, a friend's worth more than money. A friend's worth more than money. About two or three weeks from that time, one of them dogs got gone. And I never

bothered it. And he come and he said, "Willard, have you seed anything of my dogs?" I said, "No sir, Levi." I said, "I've not bothered your dogs." I said, "If I'd a-bothered your dogs," I said, "I'd a-looked you in the face and a-told you so." I said, "I never bothered your dogs." I said, "I never killed him now." I said, "If I'd a-killed him I'd a-said, 'Yes, Levi, I killed your dog.'" And I said--went on about three or four weeks from that time the other one got gone. Somebody knowed what they was a-doin'. I didn't do it now. I never bothered em. Never killed em.

David: Do you think those dogs were killing other dogs?

Willard: Oh yes sir. You take that dog there and that little old white one up here, little old black and white pied? Now the other dogs better leave them two alone.

'Cause now when the other dog goes on one of them, that-un's a-goin' on him. Both of em'll tear him down in a few minutes. Now the only two dogs that ever I seed--one give the other something to eat. Mine can be eatin' and Snookey--that's, that's Polly's dog, that little white and black pied. Now mine can be eatin', Bozo can be eatin', and Snookey come down here, he'll just stop and give him somethng to eat too. Yes sir, the only two dogs I ever seed do that.

David: Dogs don't do that much.

Willard: No sir. But they's the best friend of any--that one don't come like they used to did. Before they got that

little old feist up there, Bozo, uh Snookey, every day. I've seed Bozo look, set on the porch out there and watch fer him to come down here. And when he come they'd take the awfullest gang of playin' you ever seed. That little old feist that's here now--oh my lord--sometimes they get in here and get to playin', and it beats any dog I ever saw.

And I'll tell you what that one done, and you won't believe it. And it's true. Yeah, I'm gonna tell you what Bozo done. When he was a puppy we was unloadin' a load of wood behind the house over yander, and Sid turned around and looked and he was in the hen nest. A-helpin' hisself. Just a-eatin' em as fast as he could eat em. Sid went over to him, stepped over to him, and just got on him bad, stomped him just about all over the ground. Told him--you know, I never saw that dog with a egg till back last summer. I come out and was a-standin' out there, and I looked out in the yard, out in the grass, and he was a-eatin' something. I just said to myself, "I wonder if he be eatin' a egg." But that was awful temptin'. The hen laid--his bed under the floor. Well, I went on out there to him. Sure enough, he was a-eatin a egg, and I just kicked his tail end bad. Made him mad. Run out a few steps and looked back at me and growled. I said, "All right," I said, "if you want to fight it out we'll just fight it out. You ain't gonna suck eggs around here. As good as we feed you." Everytime we eat, that dog eats.

Every time, three times a day. When we eat my dog eats. Went on a day or two after that, and Ora gets that quilt fillin' in an old pasteboard pipe about that big. One of them a-layin' there in the yard. And about the same place he was a day or two before that, I seed him a-eatin' something again. I picked up that pasteboard pipe and went out there. And sure enough, he was a-eatin' a egg. I laid it on him, bad, and talked to him just like I'm a-talkin' to him now. I said, "I told you you couldn't suck eggs around here, as good as we feed you." Well, he put her on me. Next day he brought the egg on the porch and never broke it. Absolutely, brought the egg on the porch and never broke it. And I ain't seed him with another one from then till now. Yes sir, he outdone me there. And you can't get around here without him a-knowin' it. That's all there is at. But he won't bite you. Only way he'll bite you, if you was to stomp his feet or his tail. He tried me one day when I got on to his tail. On his feet, he was just up and rared back. I got it out of him too. He just don't like that. Now, wherever I'm a-gonna be he's a-gonna be.

Back on back, I'd take a nap every day. I'd go upstairs when it was hot, cool enough, two good beds up there, and I'd lay down on one of them beds and take a nap. And one day I started up there. I said, "You want to go with me?" That what I said to him. He hardly come in the house--he just wouldn't come in the house atall. Couldn't

get him in the house. And I went on up there and he followed me to the foot of the stairs. I said, "Come on up if you want to." I went on up there. Right down--a piece of carpet on the floor up there, right down at the foot of my bed. He laid down and I took a nap and I come on back down.

Some time ago I went somewhere, I don't know where it was at now, but anyhow I got gone. And Ora said he got to huntin' fer me. He went around to the woodshed, went all in the woodshed a-huntin' fer me. Come in the house, went upstairs huntin' fer me. And if I'm gone a day or overnight once he'll set on the end of the porch and just howl. But I wouldn't sell atall. He's five years old Christmas. Goin' on six now. And that was the prettiest puppy dog I ever saw in my life. All he was was just a bunch of yaller wool. Boy, he was pretty. Somebody--I don't know how many people's axed me what kind of a dog he was. I said, "I don't know." I said, "He's just dog, that's all I know." But he's got a lot of sense.

David: Did you find him?

Willard: No, my half brother's wife--the beginnin' of them dogs come from some of them there folks that come from overseas. She come down here and she had him. She said, "Willard, I brought you a dog." I said, "Well now," I said, "is it a boy dog?" She said, "Yeah." I said, "Well, bring him on." I took care of him.

But I used to have a little black feist. It didn't make no difference where I was at or what I was a-doin', she went all over this house, climbed the ladder. Climb a ladder just the same as I could. One time I was over here at a place they called the Lark Mountain a-squirrel huntin'. And she'd tree squirrels. She was pretty good. And she treed a squirrel out in an old field pine out in the field. And I couldn't find that squirrel atall. I just set my gun down and told her, I said, "Betty, now," I said, "I'm gonna run him out." Well, I took up that pine and I got to a--I couldn't find the squirrel. And I turned around and looked, and she's a-standin' on the next limb below me. I got down, eased down, and got a-hold of her, and got her under my arms. She was over twenty feet from the ground. And I carried her down back to the--down to the bottom.

Now I want to tell you another thing that happened during my life. Betty up here, that Rosseau's daughter, she had a little mixed-up feist looking thing, and boy, boy, would he tree squirrels! I offered her a twenty-dollar bill fer him. And she wouldn't sell him. And I was a-comin' around--I'd been a-squirrel huntin' that day. I come around the mountain, 'round to the side of Junior Hollman's down here, and I heared that little dog bark, up above the road. I said, "Well," I said, "I guess he's got a squirrel treed." Sure enough, I went on up there, and, [Bozo goes to the door and scratches it.] He

wants to go out. I went on up there, and up about halfway up the tree set a cat, and on in the top of the tree set a squirrel. And I killed the squirrel and left the cat a-settin' up in the tree. I never knowed why--the things you see like that you never forget.

And I'll tell you another thing, too, mother's love never dies. I seed this twice in days gone by. They's a place down under the mountain here, a boundary of timber used to be, and they called it the Coon Den Branch. If a dog got after a coon and he could get there that's where he went, to get away from him. Well, the Old Man Ed Morts come over here, got after me to see--we didn't have nothin' to do then. He lived out on top of the hill up there in a little old log cabin. And he wanted us to cut that boundary of timber. Well, we decided we'd go down and look at it. It was rough, boy, MMMMM! But it was good stuff. Big water oaks and poplars, and forest pines three-and-a-half and four foot through, just plenty of em. We went down. He said now, "William Miller--" the man we went to see--"he'll do the sawin'." And he said, "He'll do the scalin'." And he said, "If he cheats you boys, he'll cheat hisself." That's what he said. And he said, "Whatever William turns in," said, "I'll pay you fer." Well, we decided we'd go down. Went and got us a good cross-cut saw and went down. And tied into that. One day we's a-cuttin', we fell a big forest pine right down the mountain, just--oh man, it didn't leave nothin' on it.

Big, little, went down with her when she went. Well, we felled that tree and I went down to measure the first cut off of it. And I seed a flyin' squirrel a-comin' up that log, comin' up that tree. I said, "Steve, wait a minute." I said, "Let's see something here." We just set down. She come up, come right off and went to huntin'. And when she found em she had three and they was about the size of chestnuts. She got one of em in her mouth, picked it right up, and right over to the side of us was a big hollar sourwood. And she took one of em and took it down in there. She come back, went right back down and got up another one, and one of em got killed. And she took that one was alive, and she took it up and put it down that old hollar sourwood. She come back and she took her little nose and she rooted him over and over and over, and found out it was dead, and she left it. I seed that happen one more time in Virginia. The same thing only nary one of them didn't get killed. She took em that time and put em in an old squirrel's nest in a tree. I seed that happen. But mother's love won't die.

Now I think of things myself, happen back then better than I--something happened last week. I'll start from here to the house after something and forget what I started after before I get there. Now, Nancy, that's gettin' feeble. I started to the house after something the other day and forgot what it was. And come on back, happened to think of it and I went back, and got it. I don't know what

it was now. But your thinkin' faculty will actually grow weaker. Well, I reckon it's to be that way. Has to be. You can't stay young always. But so fer as now my health, my body is in fair shape. Sometimes I think I wore my eyes out, but I hain't.

David: Well, you don't need glasses, do you?

Willard: No. Got a pair in the house cost me a hundred and twenty dollars and I never pick em up. Once in a while.

[A man comes in to buy two slingshots. As he leaves, Willard notices the threatening skies.] Yeah, it's comin' from the right country fer a big one now.

David: You think we're going to have a big one?

Willard: Well, I don't know yet. It's comin' the right way. When it comes from that way, comes from this way not enough to amount to nothin'. I've seed it snow four or five inches from here. Well, children, a matter of time, so. Nancy, I guess to tell you the truth, and if I didn't want to tell you the truth I wouldn't tell you nothin'.

I'd look at you and smile and that's all you'd get. I guess I've thought of Doc more times than any other one human in the--this country. They's never a day goes by but what I think of Doc. I carried him in my arms and on my back. I 'member that well and he does yet too. But I can't understand how he keeps all that in his head--I just can't know. Now, them old time songs, old time spiritual songs from out of them old song books, by God, I just don't

know. But now his daddy-in-law was the best fiddler I ever heared. Yes sir. I got a album in the house he--I ain't got to play the last new one he give me. My needle went to the bad on my record player, but I sent yesterday and got--Tina went and got one and put it back in. It's all right now but I ain't took time and Bonnie's so bad I can't--I can't play it. No sir.

I'll tell you. I come along one time out there at--he lives out on the mountain here, and he was a little feller, and his little shoes had run down. And I always called his daddy Luke. I said, "Luke, I'm goin' to take this here little boy home with me." And I had an iron last and stuff then, they kept em. They tanned them days--they'd tan a gray squirrel's hide and they called it whang leather and you couldn't break it. And I brought him on home. I tanned a squirrel and brought it on home. And I got my last out after supper. Was goin' to tell you, wasn't no roads here then. The old road went up over there. From down yander to the road was a path come up to the house. When it come to that rough place, I picked him up and set him a-straddlin' my neck. Carried him on up to the house. Hub, he--him and Hub loved each other as good as anybody. That was the oldest son. And I fixed up his little shoes and sewed em up.

Never scarcely ever an airplane crosses the sky but what I don't think of Doc. Now that's just how many times I've thought of him. Doc's gettin' about old enough to

retire. I'd like to live to see Doc come out. When he built his home up there--now that's a pretty home too--I said, "Doc, I'd like to live to see you get your home paid fer." And the very minute Doc got his home paid fer he come and seed me. He said, "Willard," he said, "I've got my home paid fer." Somebody told me the other day he had it up fer sale, and by God, while you got it good enough better let good enough alone. The stuff that's in that house now, they ain't no better. The framin' in that house was just as--you can't buy the framin' today. It's pitiful what framin' costs you now. The framin' of that house--the wood of that house, only the best.

When I got my leg hurt down here he [Bozo] knowed they was something the matter with me, boy. It didn't take him long to know it neither. But when Spencer Miller down here fell dead, it hurt me about the worst of anybody that ever went away in this country. He was the best neighbor you ever seed. Somebody called me that mornin' and axed me if I'd heared anything from down about Spencer's. And I told em I hadn't. I hadn't then at that time. Well, his daughter-in-law come up and stopped out there and told us, Spencer fell dead. It hurt me so bad I couldn't help to cry about that to save my life. And I was a-settin' on the steps up there, and that dog knowed there was something the matter with me. He walked right around behind me now, laid his head right over agin my jaw there. Didn't you, son? Yeah, he did.

I'll tell you what he done here the other day. When that snow was on the ground I come out and he run up yander on top, set a bark or two, and run up the hill there, and I said, "What's the matter, son?" And he run back down to me, and he was a-tellin' me then. But I didn't hardly understand him. And he run back to the edge of the woods and barked again. Well, I heared a hen squall. I said, "Go get him, boy." By God, when he got there he jumped right on him, made him turn her loose. Hawk had a hen. But he didn't kill her. Hurt her bad but she got over it. He went right up there, went right on her. Now that's one thing he won't allow around this plantation is two roosters a-fightin'. No sir. He won't bother them roosters. I've got a bunch of young roosters here I'm gonna eat. Just the right size too. Chicken that's raised down on the ground is a way gone better chicken than you go to the market and buy. And got a better taste.

One day, that was before we built the woodshed, Levi told me over here, that he heared a hen squallin' over here above the house. And he said that dog come out from under the floor and went around there. Well, he got close enough to that hawk to hit the feathers but he didn't get a-hold enough to hold him. He'd a-chawed him to death. But now he just won't allow roosters to fight atall. He'll stand there and watch them chickens, and as long as them roosters don't go together and go to fightin', he'll never go about em. But when they go together and go to fightin' he's

a-goin' right on to both of em. Yes sir. Yeah, he just won't have it.

I'll never own nary another one though. If ever I own another dog, I'm a-gonna hunt me a big German police, a big one. I want to raise him though. Now, he'll have to mind me, but they're mean. They're mean. But that little dog I was tellin' about gettin' killed, he come from Ohio. Arnold's son--he got so mean up there they couldn't stand him. He sent fer a plumber to come--something had happened to his pump outfit--and when he come to fix that water--his name was Rusty--Rusty says, "No, you ain't a-comin' in." And he couldn't. Yeah, he'd a-eat him up if he'd a-went there. He went back and called Kermit and told him, he said, "I can't fix that water fer you, son." Said, "That dog won't allow it." They brought him down and give him to me. And I liked him good. He could tree squirrels too.

Somebody come one day--somebody come one day, and by God he said, "No," said, "you ain't a-comin' in." And when he did I picked up a stick there was here and just knocked the fire out of him and said, "No, you can't bite my neighbors around here." But I had to treat him pretty mean, though, before he found that wouldn't do. After he found out, he was all right. Up there in my steps he stepped in my concrete and left his footprint.

I reckon Doc's been in every state but one, and I don't know which one that is. He's been in all of em, I think. I don't see how he didn't get into that mess, he's

been everywhere else. But Doc like to drowned me once, and I'm pretty hard to drown. Me and him was in St. Louis, Missouri, together. I was aggravatin' too. Me and him come one mornin' down to get breakfast. Merle got sick and had to come home. Something happened. Left Doc there. Handled the whole concert by hisself. And they was a feller by the name of Tex Logan, played the fiddle, fer Doc. Some of em found out and told em I was a pretty good flat-foot dancer, and I was then. I'd dance with any of em. It didn't make any difference who it was or what color she was. My manager come--my manager was a woman--and she come and said, "Willard," said, "they found out that you're a pretty good dancer." I said, "Well," I said, "yeah, fair, I guess." Said, "Will you dance one on the stage?" I said, "Yeah, don't make no difference to me." And that auditorium was just as full as people could get in it, and standin' around the walls. I went and told Doc, said "Doc," I said, "they gonna want me to dance one." I axed him--I told him--he axed me, said, "What do you want me to play, Willard?" I said, "'Salty Dog' or 'John Henry,' either one." They got good time too. If you can't time your feet with music you ain't goin' to dance. He said, "Well, I'll play 'Salty Dog.'" Well, I told him, I said, "Doc, just play it at a medium speed." I said, "My motor ain't as young as it used to be." And you know, he got up on the stage and told that on me. Got on the stage and told that.

Me and him went down one mornin' somewhere to get breakfast, and I always wear a hat, wherever I'm at. I've got a hat in the house that cost me--just lacked a few cents of costin' me forty dollars. It's the second best rolled-rim Stetson that's made. Four X beaver is the best and this is a three. And I said--me and him went in--and they was a feller there said, "You can't wear your hat in here." I said, "What in the Hell you want me to do with it, throw it away?" I said, "I give twenty dollars fer it." That throwed him back. He didn't say no more to me. Now I'm pretty hard to corner.

I've got a good one here happened here some time ago. I got sorta aggravated here at a piece of wood. I knowed if I kept on tinkerin' with it after awhile it'd outdo me. I'd tear it up. I walked over yander to the old shop door and was a-standin' there. And they come a young feller up this creek, hittin' here and yander. Parked his automobile there and hopped out of his automobile, just sassy. He said, "I'd like to ax you a question." I said, "Yes sir, young feller." I said, "If it's in the dictionary I'll answer it. If it ain't," I said, "we'll get us a Bloom's Almanac and see when the sign is to answer it." He said, "Could you tell me where this road goes?" I said, "I'm sorry, young feller, this road don't go anywhere." I said, "It stays right where it's at." I want to tell you one thing. That young feller didn't ax me no more qestions. Next day about the same time a day, somewheres on up in the

day--I'd tuned up then, I was in a good humor. I was standin' out there in the shop yard, woman drove up in a nice automobile. She said, "My friend, I'd like to ax you a question." I said, "Yes mam." I said, "If it's in the dictionary I'll answer it." I said, "If it ain't we'll get us a Bloom's Almanac." I said, "We'll see when the sign is to answer it." I didn't make it as hard on her as I did the young feller. She said, "Could you tell me where this road goes to." I said, "Well, woman, I'll tell you." I said, "I'm sorry, this road don't go anywhere." I said, "It stays right where it's at. But," I said, "it empties out on 421 about two miles from here. Now I didn't make it as hard on her as I did that young feller. If he hadn't acted so smart, I wouldn't a-bit him so bad.

Now I'll tell you the worse human I've ever met. And I've met em of all types, colors and kinds. An educated fool is the worse one I've ever tackled. He ain't got sense enough to tell you, and he don't know what he wants to tell you. Now they ain't none of em gets ahead of me. Boy, I've struck some tough ones. But still yet--.

They's a little bitty black feist here--now you talk about two a-gettin' a-playin'. Now they take a spell of playin' that beats anything you ever seed. And my cousin--no, granddaughter Tina, she's got a little old black fuzzy one. And he don't like that one atall. He just won't fool with it atall. But let me tell you, that little one knows when he puts the wrong growl on. He knows

when to get out of the way. He got crippled up bad too. I told em the other day, I said--I'm always aggravatin' em over their bought hair, you know. I said, "Look at my dog's hair." I said, "He don't put none of that in the washin' machine and wash it and scrub it." And I said, "Look at it." I said, "It stays pretty all the time." And it does. I can go to sprayin' something from one of these spray cans--he can't stand that. No sir. He can't stand that atall. He got crippled up bad but he got over it.

I seed a little of snow awhile ago out there. Now, boys, if it starts from down yand way, you better get a pile of wood in.

David: You think we're going to have more snow this year?

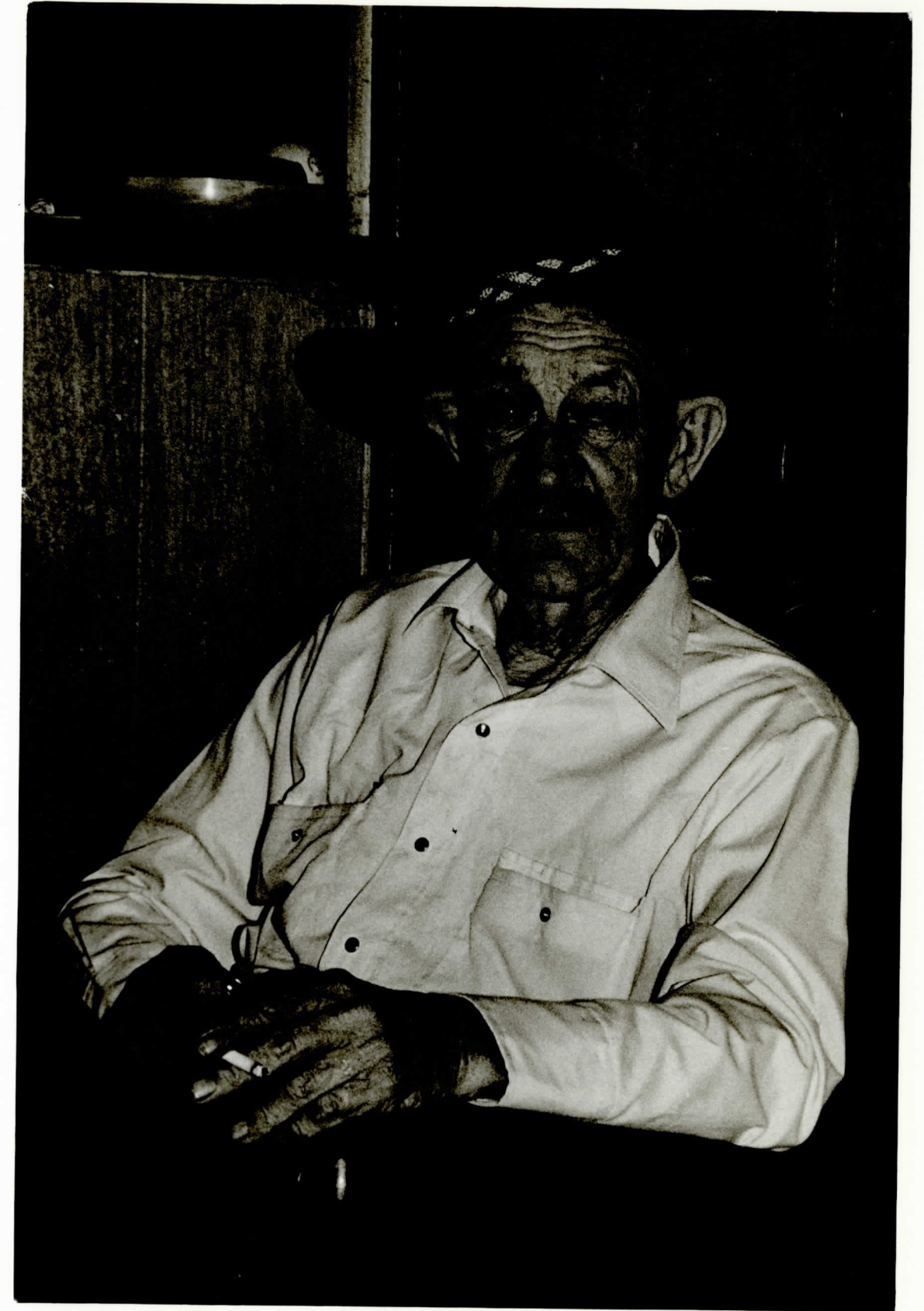
Willard: We've not had too much, but I don't believe we'll have as much as we have had. Goin' back winters that's gone. We've not had too much snow this winter. Boy, we had some burnin' days around Christmas though. I was in here when she was four below. The fire built, and shirt sleeves. I hope it don't kill the peaches down the country. I heared em a-talkin' the other day on the news. Said if they lost the peach crop in South Carolina this time it was gonna break em. Couldn't stand it no more.

Now I noticed the other night on the news in some state in a western place where they was a-feedin' their animals. And you know I've been in the Yellowstone Park five times. And I've studied about it and looked around and looked about it. Now that game--how them elks and

antelopes and deer and mooses gets by, as cold as it gets there. Now we stayed two days, I believe it was. I don't know where we stayed. We stayed two days, I think we did in the Yellowstone Park. Ask the Old Lady--she didn't like that at all. We caught some fish and fried em and they said the day before--we rented a little cabin--had to shovel the snow from out around the door. But good and warm in there. But now I just can't understand how them animals stands all that. But the cattle there and the sheep both, cattle's got a third more hair on em than they have here. We lost a lot of horses, though, froze to death, and starved too--they couldn't get to em. I had an uncle that stayed there years and years. And they come one winter there that liked to froze all the deers to death. Froze hundreds and hundreds of deers to death. And he said--he was workin' fer a sheep outfit--they handled sheep in place of cattle. And Ed Whitworth and Dude--that was their names--he was workin' fer em--and he said they had a steer they was a-gonna beef, out in the barn. And he said he went out there that mornin'. And he said the ice--his breath had froze from there to the ground. And he's a-standin' there froze to death. Now that's just way too cold fer me. But now I'll tell you the cold air--you take zero here, and this damp cold--a-hurt you a heap worse than twelve, fifteen below zero. All you got to watch there is your face gettin' frostbit. But now I love that country. If I was back young--I ain't a-gonna be, though, that's

over with--it'd be too states, either one of em--I wouldn't make no choice--be Oregon or Montana. I like Oregon. Boy, the prettiest timber, the prettiest forest timber there I've looked at in my life. I sure would love to. I told em if I was young, I'd hang my 'boggan up in one of them big lumber camps and say, "Boys, I've come to stay." I used to be as good in the woods as they was. I could use anything they had, double-bitted ax, cross-cut saw, power saw, anything they had. But it's over with. It's done gone. I'd love to go back yet. I'd love to just go back. And just walk around in the woods. But I ain't able to do it no more. My body's in good shape but my feet is gone.
[End of Tape]

APPENDIX F
Photographs





VITA

David Eugene Huntley was born in Columbia, South Carolina, on March 15, 1949. He attended elementary schools in that city and graduated from A. C. Flora High School in June, 1967. The following September he entered Furman University. In September, 1968, he entered The University of the South, and in June, 1971, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

In August, 1982, he entered Appalachian State University and began work towards a Masters Degree. This degree was awarded in 1985 in the field of English. Mr. Huntley will attend the graduate school at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill after graduation.

Mr. Huntley's address is Route 4 Box 22, Boone, North Carolina.

His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Huntley of Columbia, South Carolina.